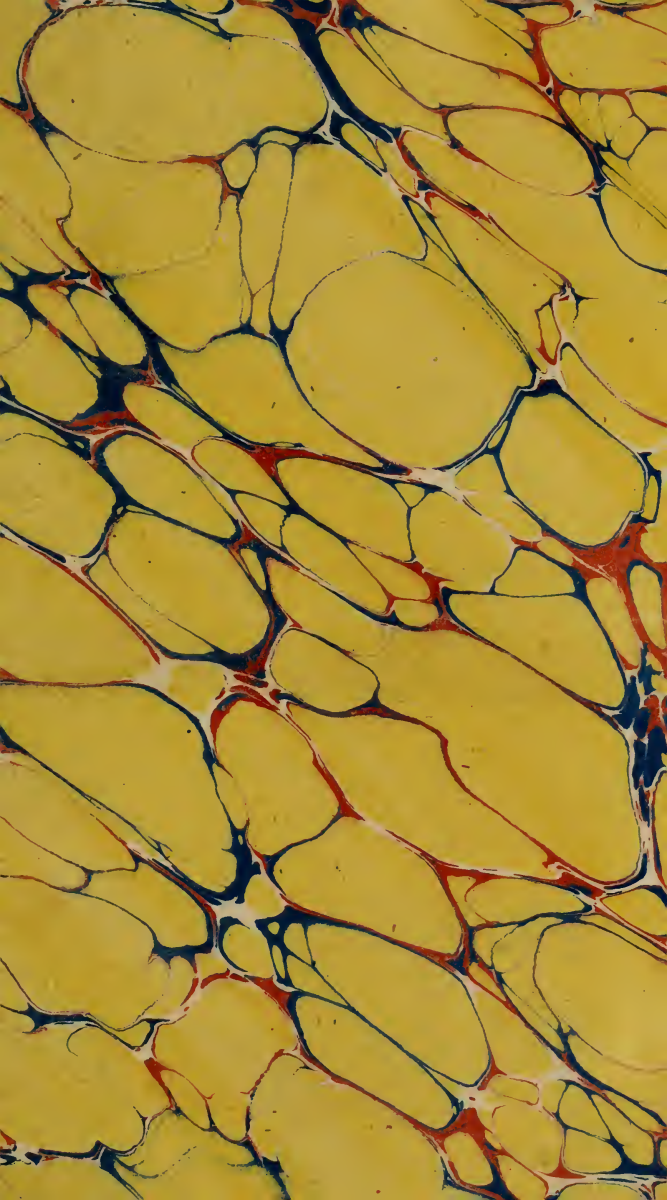


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ISABEL ST ALBE:

OR

VICE AND VIRTUE.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY MISS CRUMPE.

VOL. I.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED FOR ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE AND COMPANY;
AND HURST, ROBINSON, AND CO. LONDON; AND
JOHN CUMMING, DUBLIN.

1823.

" Virtus, recludens immeritis mori
Cœlum, negata tentat iter via ;
Cœtusque vulgares, et udam
Spernit humum fugiente penna."

HORACE.

" When blind ambition quite mistakes her road,
And downward pores for that which shines above,—
Substantial happiness and true renown,—
Then, like an idiot gazing on the brook,
We leap at stars, and fasten in the mud ;
At glory grasp, and sink in infamy."

YOUNG.

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TO

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

SIR,

WHEN venturing, for the first time, to meet the ordeal of general criticism, some apology seems requisite, in order to exonerate an unknown Author from the charges of vanity and presumption. Perhaps the most powerful excuse that can be offered presents itself, when a character equally distinguished by the strictest integrity, and the most brilliant genius, accords the sanction of encouragement and approbation.

That excuse your kindness has afforded in the present instance. Therefore, though painfully distrustful of the reception which the ensuing Work may experience from an enlightened and discerning Public; yet, reflecting on the opinion

you have expressed respecting its merit, and the Dedication you have also authorized, my many anxieties are partially diminished, as, with the liveliest gratitude, I respectfully inscribe the succeeding pages to a name which must ever stand enrolled amongst the brightest ornaments of British literature.

I have the honour to remain,

SIR,

Your sincerely obliged,

And obedient Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

LIMERICK,

24th February 1823.

ERRATA.

IN consequence of the Author's absence from the scene of publication, it has been found indispensable to annex the following list of Errata—The same cause has also rendered a corrected copy of the stanzas, in page 284, equally necessary:—

VOL. 1.

- Page 9, line 3—For 'drop'—read 'droop'
13, do. 7—For 'denizen'—read 'resident'
14, do. 13—For 'paternal'—read 'fraternal'
20, do. 12—For 'was'—read 'is'
24, do. 8—For 'eustoms'—read 'customs'
44, do. 11—For 'did'—read 'dared'
56, do. 6—For 'paying'—read 'remunerating'
72, do. 17—For 'lines'—read 'hues'
79, do. 4—For 'in a'—read 'in an'
80, do. 10—For 'shrunk'—read 'slunk'
89, do. 23—For 'enough'—read 'sufficient'
98, do. 22—For 'on'—read 'in'
122, do. 2—For 'pointing'—read 'pouting'
123, do. 7—For 'fashionable'—read 'tonish'
156, do. 1—For 'L'nomo'—read 'L'uomo'
158, do. 24—For 'as well as brilliant as if a'—read
'as well as if he was as brilliant as a'
211, do. 5—For 'heart to think even of'—read
'heart even to think of'
214, do. 10—For 'skippedway'—read 'skipped away'
216, do. 12—For 'startled'—read 'started'

[See over

Though thine image, my father, is trac'd
On memory's tablet, too deep,
During time, to be ever effac'd
By aught save "the long dreamless sleep;"

Yet as music is dear to the heart,
When echo returns its soft tone;
So the limner, with magical art,
Shall render thy likeness my own.

But the worth in thy bosom enshrin'd,
Can the painter truly pourtray?
No! alone in thy heart can he find
What his pencil could never display.

Thus the witch'ry of talent gives place
To filial affection for thee;
Though the limner thy features may trace;
The *soul* of his sketch is with me.

For the pictures bright tints may decay,
The Lily and Rose may vanish,
But the portrait of mem'ry will stay
It's hues—oh! what pow'r could banish?

And time's withering wing may deface
Thy dear mimic form;—but never
Can his touch from the heart's fane chase
The spirit that lives for ever!

ISABEL ST ALBE.

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ISABEL ST ALBE.

CHAPTER I.

“AN invitation from Lady Belville, to spend the winter with her in London, (in which you and aunt Eleanor are both included,) and a distant allusion to a subsequent visit to Paris, dearest father !” exclaimed the delighted Isabel St Albe, as, with sparkling eyes and looks beaming pleasure, she entered the breakfast room with an open letter. “Now, do tell me,” she continued, “what answer shall I return ?” as, with an air of bewitching tenderness, one arm was caressingly thrown round her father’s neck, whilst her right hand playfully displayed the newly received epistle *à la distance*.

“ How easy to theorize,—how difficult to practise !” rejoined Mr St Albe with a smile. “ It was but yesterday, my Isabel, that, after the perusal of the last new poem, from which we together derived such infinite pleasure, you exclaimed with enthusiasm, ‘ Can any of the boasted amusements of the gay world yield half the sterling gratification that is to be experienced in the pursuit of rational information ? To cultivate those talents with which a merciful Providence has graciously endowed his creatures, and to exercise domestic virtue in performing the charities of life, must surely afford superior happiness ;’ yet now, the moment the tempter appears in the form of an invitation to London, my Isabel’s ‘ fairy frost-work’ of philosophy instantly vanishes,—the siren voice of pleasure calls, and is obeyed.”

“ ‘ Life’s enchanted cup but sparkles near the brim,’ says your own favourite poet, dearest father. Still let me taste the delusive poison which floats on the surface of the draught contained in life’s goblet, even should I be

doomed to find the dregs bitterness !” Isabel added, in a more subdued tone : then, perceiving a slight shade cross Mr St Albe’s countenance, she gaily said, “Nay, think not I mean to play Cassandra’s part, or any part, save that of an affectionate child to the best of parents—Accept this kiss as a pledge of my sincerity.”

“Bribery and corruption !” exclaimed Mrs Eleanor Fitzroy, who at that moment entered the breakfast room. “Isabel, what addition to your library are you now soliciting ?—Brother, what favour are you going to grant ?”

“This letter will betray the secret, aunt ! Study its contents *tête a tête* with my father, and inform me of the result of your united opinions, to which I promise unqualified submission ; meanwhile I shall retire, using the words of Sir Peter Teazle, ‘Lady and Gentleman, I wish you good morning ; I leave you my reputation,’”—saying which, with a mock reverence to each of her loved relatives, Isabel, on the tip-toe of expectation, left the room.

“What can have induced Lady Belville at

length to notice our lovely Isabel ?” cried Mrs Eleanor, as the door closed, and as she glanced her eye over the epistle she held. “In these enlightened days, relationship is so much out of vogue, that the idea of family connection has become quite obsolete ; now the endearing appellatives of uncle, aunt, &c. are sacrificed on the cold altar of Fashion, while the polite terms of *Mr and Mrs* are substituted in their stead. But I dare not trust myself on the forbidden topic of comparison between ancient and modern times, else I should wander far from the subject of our present discussion: tell me, then, brother, do you mean to accept this fine lady’s invitation, which of course *I* shall decline ?”

“If it meets with your approbation, I rather think I shall.—Eleanor, is there any use in attempting to alter your determination to play the recluse ?” rejoined Mr St Albe affectionately.

“None whatever,” replied his sister, with an expressive smile—“but what sort of person is Lady Belville ?” she added in an anxious tone.

“ I cannot exactly answer your question ; yet I believe her ladyship is not precisely the chaperon I should choose for my daughter on her entrance into life ; nevertheless she has, I understand, many of the requisites deemed necessary for that important office.—I imagine Lady Belville is what is *now* called a well-conducted woman, that is, she keeps on civil terms with her *caro sposo*, heads his establishment *comme il faut*, condescends to matronize her daughters to court, (having it no longer in her power, on the plea of youth, to retain them in the nursery,) dresses well, indulges in a little harmless *persiflage*, and a few coquettish airs, with the numerous beaux who always follow wealth and title,

“ Thick as the idle motes in sunny beam ;”

is polished in her manners, understands *ton*, &c.—all of which is quite sufficient to form the *ne plus ultra* of excellence in a matron of the nineteenth century.”

“ Brother, brother !” exclaimed Mrs Elea-

nor, “and to such a woman would you entrust our lovely unsophisticated Isabel?—she who has been educated in comparative retirement, amongst her own native wilds, ‘herself the fairest flower.’ Recollect that, although her extraordinary mental powers have been cultivated to the highest pitch by your unremitting exertions, yet that in worldly knowledge our Isabel is ignorance itself; remember also, that those very talents of which you are so justly proud, united to a considerable degree of personal beauty, will render her an object, at which malice and envy will be but too ready to aim their envenomed shafts. ‘Genius (to use the words of a modern author) is a brilliant meteor, which dazzles and often misleads.’ You smile at my now underrating the god-like gift of superior intellect, which you have so often heard me extol. I admit the apparent contradiction, but recollect that, when I joined you in desiring to expand, rather than to repress Isabel’s powers of mind, it was under the idea of their contributing to enliven and embellish that seclusion, to which I imagined she

was destined ; never were they intended for exhibition in the contagious climate of the world, where all the finest feelings drop and die, and where the meretricious glare of superficial accomplishments is worshipped in preference to solid acquirements of sterling value."

" My dearest Eleanor," replied St Albe, affectionately taking her hand, " you appear to view this subject in a more serious light than is necessary. In the first place, I do not apprehend that danger to Isabel's mind and morals from an intercourse with the world which your sensitive imagination anticipates. Her principles of Christian piety are rational and sincere, and will, I am convinced, ever influence her conduct ; her understanding is of the very first order ; the genius with which she is blessed is under the control of excellent common sense, without which guide, I grant that talent will often mislead, particularly *woman*. My Isabel's mind does not resemble a highly decorated pleasure boat, which will glide gaily on life's ocean, as long as it con-

tinues calm and unruffled, but, ill calculated to struggle with adverse tides, will sink, or strike on the first shoal or quicksand that presents itself, for want of ballast ; besides, I shall at least for a short time be myself my daughter's guardian, and shall employ that period in studying the characters of those with whom she will probably make her *début* in the *beau monde*. The duties of my sacred profession will not allow me to remain long in London, a circumstance I shall not at present mention to Isabel, as, when the day of parting absolutely arrives, she will, I am sure, require all her stock of fortitude to sustain even a temporary separation from you, Eleanor, whom, next to myself, she values most on earth."

A tear glistened in Eleanor's eye, as she exclaimed, " May Heaven, in its mercy, grant that all may prove as you wish! Oh! think not," she continued, " that selfish motives influenced my share in this conversation ; my love for Isabel is too pure to admit of such alloy ; but, to repeat a question I have already urged,—

Can you imagine Lady Belville's motive for her present proceeding?"

"Not exactly; my intercourse with my brother's family has been of late years so very slight, that I am almost a stranger amongst his social circle. You are aware, that, on my union with your sister, my dear departed Isabel, I immediately entered into orders, obtained a living in Ireland, and retired to this parsonage, where, for a few short years, I enjoyed happiness so perfect, so pure, that, had not death deprived me of an angel in woman's form, three summers subsequent to our marriage, I might have been in danger of forgetting that 'Heaven above,' where all our thoughts should be directed, having found its absolute reality on earth." St Albe's voice faltered,—but making a strong effort at self-command, he continued:—"Isabel, the sole pledge of that sacred connection, has since been my only comfort. To you, who have shared with me in directing her education, I need not say how well I have been recompensed for all my cares. Charming as she is, how-

ever, I imagine Lady Belville must be instigated to her present proceeding by some sinister motive, rather than by a real interest in my beloved child's welfare. What that motive can be, I profess myself at a loss to discover. Having known so very little of my brother's wife, I can scarcely venture to judge, except from report, which says, she is a handsome accomplished woman of the world, and the latter character seldom acts without design. Lord Belville, and his only son, Lord Allanby, have been abroad for some years. With neither of them have I had any intercourse since my residence in Ireland, except occasionally in the epistolary way. To you, my dearest Eleanor, I may acknowledge, that Lord Belville has ever evinced so much coldness and distrust towards me, that I have long ceased to consider him in the light of a brother ; his conduct, indeed, has often struck me as extraordinary."

" 'Tis strange !—the disparity in your ages is not very great ?"

" Only about fifteen years."

" That is not a sufficient inequality to ac-

count for such total want of fraternal warmth and affection."

" True ;—but education much contributed to mutual estrangement. His lordship passed the early part of his life in Italy, whilst I, the issue of my father's second marriage, have generally been a denizen in John Bull's empire."

" At what period did the present Lord Belville leave the Continent?"

" Shortly after his mother's death, who, you are aware, was of German extraction."

" Probably that circumstance accounts for his predilection for foreign society ; but tell me, did not your father's second union take place about four years after his return to England?"

" Yes. My mother was the last remaining branch of an illustrious house. She died in giving me birth."

" I recollect having heard, that even in childhood you scarcely associated with your brother, for that, as soon as age permitted, you were sent to a public school."

“Precisely;—nor did I visit home until after I had passed through one of the English Universities. On my return, I found every thing arranged for the present Lord Belville’s union; and shortly after it was solemnized, the bride and bridegroom commenced a tour of pleasure through Great Britain, accompanied by my father, who had always resided with, and been infinitely more partial to his eldest son than to me, the offspring of his second choice.”

“Consequently, in maturer life, you were equally prevented from establishing paternal friendship?”

“Of course.—And being left entirely to myself, I continued to reside in London, occasionally making excursions to the neighbouring watering-places.”

“At one of them you met my beloved, lamented sister,” rejoined Mrs Eleanor, with a sigh.

“I did.—To know her was to love.—I woo’d and won the greatest treasure Heaven

e'er bestowed," exclaimed St Albe, in strong emotion.

"Your father, at least, showed some affection in not opposing your choice," said Mrs Eleanor soothingly.

"True,—he consented to my union with Isabel, the most perfect of her sex! I married three years subsequent to my brother's espousals."

"Besides, your father then gave you an annuity, which, though not very considerable, has yet been sufficient to allow us every comfort in this our happy parsonage," rejoined Mrs Eleanor, kindly taking St Albe's hand.

"Yes,—this living is his gift; and, as it is endeared to memory by many associations, I have resided here since my Isabel's birth, and shall, I think, for ever!" sighed St Albe.

"I recollect that Lord Belville's last illness commenced a short time after your marriage, and that, by his physician's orders, he repaired to Devonshire."

"He did; but insisted that the present Lord and Lady Belville should uninterrupt-

edly pursue their tour through Scotland. My father's life was not considered in the slightest danger, and his health for some time continued to amend, when suddenly a fatal relapse alarmed his medical attendants, and an express was instantly dispatched to require his eldest son's immediate attendance. The summons was quickly obeyed by my brother and his lady, who, on their arrival, found my poor father almost in the agonies of death."

"And were you not apprized of your parent's state?"

"No—I was not informed that his life was in peril; nor, indeed, did I hear of his demise, until some time after the melancholy event; when the present Lord Belville forwarded to me a copy of our father's will, in which I found myself heir to the moderate property I now possess."

"With the majority of those circumstances, I have been long acquainted; but, owing to my absence from the parsonage at the period they occurred, I never, until now, heard them distinctly related," said Mrs Eleanor.

“ I believe not, for our conversation has generally been on more agreeable topics ; but the letter Isabel has just received induced me to discuss at length the unpleasant subject. You perceive, my dear Eleanor, that many events have contributed to render me such an alien from my immediate connections, that I feel it impossible to pronounce with certitude any opinion on their respective merits.”

“ Undoubtedly ; but are you even by report acquainted with your nieces’ characters ?”

“ Not in the least. Perhaps they may be amiable, and worthy of cultivating an intimacy with their cousin. If so, I shall rejoice in having acceded to Lady Belville’s proposal, as I have long wished that Isabel should be made known to persons, whose near relationship, and rank in life, render a mutual acquaintance proper, if not absolutely necessary. The overture has been made on *their* side, (from what motives, it does not become me to inquire ;) therefore, if you have no material ob-

jection, Eleanor, I think it ought not to be rejected."

"Forgive me, brother, for having a moment disputed the point," she eagerly replied;—"to your superior judgment I yield without a murmur—I had almost said without a fear; and now let me hasten to inform Isabel, that her aunt's invitation shall be accepted, and that you will be her escort to London." So saying, the worthy woman, endeavouring to banish every trace of anxiety from her brow, adjourned to Isabel's apartment, to acquaint her with the result of the *tête-a-tête* conference.

CHAPTER II.

ON hearing Mrs Eleanor's step, Isabel flew to meet her, exclaiming, " Well, dearest aunt, ' To be, or not to be ? that is the question.' "

" Your father has decided in the affirmative ; you are both to leave this in a few days," returned Mrs Eleanor.

" And are you not to accompany us ?" cried Isabel, in an eager tone.

" No, my love, I remain here. An old woman is always considered intrusive in the circle of fashion ; besides, I would not willingly resign my station, as superintendent of the domestic arrangements of our happy parsonage, for all the gay world could offer."

" Oh ! my beloved aunt, how unfeeling I must have appeared, in so earnestly desiring a

transition to its dissipated scenes," cried Isabel; "but I thought, *indeed* I thought, you were to join our travelling party, nor can I possibly consent to leave you, my best of friends," she continued, as, with glowing cheeks, and eyes suffused with tears, she regarded her aunt with looks of affectionate solicitude.

"Learn, my Isabel, to moderate such over-indulged sensibility," said Mrs. Eleanor.— "You know I have often told you, that one of your greatest faults was yielding inconsiderately to impulse. Prove to me now that my lectures have been attended to, by restraining your present feelings, which you encourage far beyond what the occasion justifies. Remember that early disappointments in life have long since rendered me callous to its illusions, insensible to its pleasures; consequently, I have no merit in preferring retirement to dissipation,—but I wish *you* to form your ideas of society, not from the, perhaps, misanthropic sentiments of an old maid, but from experience."

“ Half my air-built castles have already fallen,” said Isabel in a desponding tone. “ But, aunt ! we shall correspond, shall we not ? ”

“ Assuredly.—You shall send me an account of all the important events which occur in the hemisphere of fashion, whilst I, in return, shall give you pages of advice, (to which all antiquated spinsters are more or less prone,) accompanied by the minor details of our little quiet parsonage, in which, I trust, my Isabel will ever feel an interest ; and now, my love, prepare to join your father and me in a walk to Sir Hugh Tyrconnell’s. It will, I fear, require the united eloquence of the trio to reconcile our old friend to your approaching and suddenly arranged departure.”

In compliance with her aunt’s desire, Isabel speedily equipped herself for the proposed expedition.

CHAPTER III.

SIR HUGH TYRCONNELL'S mansion was of considerable extent, and part of the edifice, in the form of a castle, bore testimony to the baronial magnificence which adorned the residence of Sir Hugh's ancestors in the olden time. Many additions had been made of late years ; but the present possessor, disdaining the association of ancient and modern architecture, suffered the latter part to remain untenanted, and occupied the ivy-clad tower, that still rose pre-eminent over that part of the structure which had been elevated in later days.

The grounds were picturesquely beautiful, and thickly wooded with groves of venerable oak ; but were more indebted to the charms

of nature than the cultivation of art, for the beauties they possessed. A large river rolled its tributary stream within view of Tyrconnell Castle, and a magnificent chain of mountains in perspective bounded the horizon, whose conical peaks appeared absolutely cloud-capped in the feathery silvered drapery which floated on their summits in capricious and fanciful forms. Events long past had given a peculiar tone to Sir Hugh's character, and he was now so universally considered in the light of a humorist, and an oddity, that few persons in his neighbourhood ventured to obtrude their society, where almost certain of meeting a repulse. With Mr St Albe, however, the baronet had been solicitous to cultivate a close degree of intimacy, and to him he had in confidence revealed those events which had tintured so large a portion of his life with their own dark and sombre hue. Those circumstances, with the privilege of an author, we shall here take the liberty to relate.

Sir Hugh Tyrconnell was of Irish lineage, genuine Milesian blood, uncontaminated by

any *mélange*, flowed in his veins, and eloquently spoke in his expressive countenance. He was of the Roman Catholic persuasion, and in early life had become master of an excellent fortune, the principal part of which he expended in travelling through foreign countries, where he delighted in studying the manners and customs of different nations.

Sir Hugh's younger brother, Edmund Tyrconnell, had chosen the profession of arms, and held a majority in the British service. He was extremely handsome, and endowed with great natural abilities, yet volatile and unthinking, possessed of that happy, gay, generous temperament, which is usually denominated good nature, and which generally renders the individual so gifted popular in society. Never under the regulation of prudence, Edmund, from time to time, had contracted debts, which Sir Hugh, with great liberality, had as often discharged. On such occasions, Edmund would grasp his brother's hand, vow he was the best fellow in existence, promise obedience to the excellent advice the

Baronet failed not to offer ; but, ever the slave of impulse, the first temptation that presented itself too frequently overcame every good resolution, and he again commenced

“ That idle chase of hopes and fears,
Begun in folly, closed in tears.”

In external appearance, Edmund was considerably superior to Sir Hugh, whose only exterior advantages consisted in a countenance where deep feeling was strongly impressed, and whose tall gaunt figure, strikingly contrasted with the symmetrical proportions and graceful form of his younger brother.

There was one circumstance of Edmund's life, however, which appeared at total variance with the general tenor of his disposition and conduct. He had abjured the faith of his ancestors, and embraced the religion of the established church of England !

Such an act could only be accounted for, either on the ground of a conviction of previous error, (which his naturally strong intel-

lect rendered not improbable,) or else to the persuasive influence of an ardent friendship which had long subsisted between Edmund Tyrconnell and an officer in his regiment named Monteith, who was of the Protestant faith, and who had at different periods taken such infinite pains to convince Edmund of the fallacy of the Popish creed, that he had ultimately succeeded in inducing him to become a member of the Reformed church. It may be readily imagined that such a proceeding did not meet the approbation or the wishes of Sir Hugh Tyrconnell. Nevertheless, so liberal were the principles of the Baronet, so excellent his understanding, and so benevolent his heart, that, as soon as he became thoroughly assured that Edmund's change of religion was not the offspring of mere caprice, but really seemed grounded on the firm basis of positive conviction, he freely forgave an act which inflicted on his fraternal bosom many a pang, but which the sincerity of his affection for his brother could not allow him long to resent. During a winter's residence

at Madrid, the Baronet became acquainted with the only child and daughter of a Spanish grandee, whose beauty and accomplishments were universal themes of commendation in that city. Sir Hugh was not long insensible to the Donna's charms, and, encouraged by her father's approbation, he ventured to ask the fair Elvira in marriage.

Although conscious that, in accepting Sir Hugh, she was giving her hand without her heart, yet, as that heart was then unoccupied, Elvira, in compliance with her parent's wishes, accepted the Baronet's offer.

Love is apt to deceive itself, and Sir Hugh ever imagined, that the coldness she sometimes evinced to his passionate pleadings originated in maiden coyness and reserve, rather than in absolute indifference. Every thing proceeded in train for the approaching nuptials of the enraptured lover. Sir Hugh was his own master,—had no relations to consult. To human judgment, all was propitious, and nothing seemed likely to obscure the fair morning of his felicity; but a cloud arose

where least expected, and overcast the horizon of happiness with darkness and despair.

Edmund had obtained leave of absence from his regiment, and, accompanied by his friend Monteith, had been for some months engaged on a tour through the southern provinces of Spain, but at Sir Hugh's earnest request, he adjourned to Madrid to witness his union. Immediately, however, on his arrival, Edmund found that his brother had been unexpectedly obliged to go to Ireland for a short time, in consequence of some arrangements attendant on his nuptials, but learned, that on his return he was to claim "a blooming blushing bride." To enter into a long detail of subsequent circumstances is unnecessary; suffice it, therefore, to say, that an every-day intercourse with Don Diego's family (which the prospect of approaching relationship in appearance justified) contributed to increase that attachment which unconsciously had sprung in the hearts of Elvira and Edmund. Great was the consternation of both on discovering their mu-

tual passion ; many were the resolutions formed by each to conquer that ill-fated love, which honour imperatively forbade them to indulge ; but Sir Hugh's absence was prolonged much beyond the expected period. Time thus contributed to strengthen the affection of the unhappy lovers.

Edmund, warm and impetuous in his feelings, became their absolute slave, could no longer master the overwhelming influence of passion, and in a moment of infatuating delirium, he solicited and obtained the consent of Elvira to an immediate and private union. The first few weeks after that desperate step were too blissful to admit the suggestions of conscience, or the anticipations of fear. Mystery added charms to the stolen interviews of the newly wedded pair ; but such happiness was soon interrupted. Sir Hugh arrived to claim his promised bride with all a lover's ardour, augmented by absence, which, *poets* say, increases true love, though it extinguishes ephemeral passion. Concealment was no longer practicable ; in an agony of tears, Elvira

threw herself at her father's feet, and confessed her union with Edmund. To paint the despair of Sir Hugh is impossible. To find himself betrayed by the woman he adored,—supplanted in her affections by the brother for whom he had done so much,—the cup of bliss presented to his lip then dashed to the ground untasted,—was more than human fortitude well could bear. Pride, however, enabled him apparently to sustain the blow, and to treat the delinquents with the contempt their conduct certainly merited. He uttered no complaint,—he shed no tear,—but the canker-worm of misery preyed at his heart's core, and in a great measure destroyed the early promise of his dawning virtues.

Sir Hugh, as soon as it was possible, left Spain, and retired to Tyrconnell Castle, where, yielding to the fancies of a morbid imagination, which jaundiced with prejudice his view of human nature, but occasionally relapsing into the indulgence of those better feelings, which formerly adorned his character, he became that

compound of sentiment and misanthropy, that being of contradictions, which is usually denominated by the world—an oddity! The unfortunate Elvira met the unmitigated resentment of her father, Don Diego de Video, who, furious at the deception she had practised, her contempt of parental authority, and her union with a heretic, banished her from his house, and never saw Elvira more. Edmund, though conscious of the errors into which he had been led by misguided passion, yet could not bend his proud spirit to solicit pardon from the brother he had wronged so much. He continued in the army,—his pay, and small hereditary fortune, the only subsistence wherewith to maintain his still fondly cherished Elvira. A year after their union, she presented him with a son, but paid the debt of nature in giving him birth.

Don Diego's heart was at length touched on hearing of his daughter's death, and he then volunteered to send Edmund a sum in Spanish coin, equivalent to L. 5000 British, for his boy's future support, which, on his

child's account, the fond father struggled with his feelings sufficiently to accept. Shortly after that circumstance, Major Tyrconnell joined his regiment, which was soon afterwards ordered on actual service. Previous to a general engagement with the enemy, Edmund addressed a letter to Sir Hugh, which he left directions to have forwarded to the Baronet, should he fall in his country's service. In that epistle he entreated his brother's forgiveness, recommended his infant son (whom he urgently requested might be brought up in the Protestant faith) to Sir Hugh's future guardianship, entrusted to his care the L. 5000 given by Don Diego, together with the remnant of his own small fortune, and anticipating their reunion in realms of bliss hereafter, Edmund Tyrconnell took a tender farewell of his brother in this world, and it was a last farewell!

The brave soldier, covered with wounds, fell in that day's battle, and if subsequent suffering and repentance can atone for prior misconduct, his errors may surely be forgiven!

Sir Hugh was extremely affected on receiving his brother's letter, and the melancholy tidings of his death. He faithfully performed the office of guardian to his nephew, the youthful Albert ; strictly obeyed the injunction of Edmund, with respect to the religious faith of his child ; but with a strange perversity of feeling, never could be prevailed on to see his nephew, nor, indeed, to hold any intercourse with him, except, very rarely, by letter, and then solely on pecuniary topics. On receiving an account of Edmund Tyrconnell's death, Don Diego had written to the Baronet, offering to make his grandson Albert heir to his immense fortune, provided Sir Hugh would consent to allow the Don to superintend the boy's education in Spain, and would permit him to become a member of the Roman Catholic church. The proposal was decidedly rejected by the excellent Sir Hugh, who, although a believer in that faith, yet revolted with abhorrence from the idea of not fulfilling the dying and last request of his unhappy brother. Don Diego, enraged at the non-ac-

ceptance of his offer, had declared his determination never to acknowledge his grandson, and resolute in such a decision, years had elapsed without his having made any inquiries relative to Albert, or betraying the slightest interest in his welfare or establishment in life.

At the period this tale commences, Albert Tyrconnell had attained his twenty-fourth year; he had received a classical education in one of the English Universities, and had obtained several Academic honours during his literary career; but, inheriting his father's passion for the army, he had entered a cavalry regiment, where the distinction of having obtained gold medals, and Seatonian prize poems, was quickly eclipsed in the superior eclât of military exploit.

Even at an era so celebrated for martial achievements as the present, amongst compatriots so renowned for courage and tactic skill, Albert, owing to his extraordinary prowess, personal contempt of danger, and cool self-possession, even in the very moment of enthusiasm, had been particularized by his command-

ing officer in the official accounts of Waterloo, as having performed prodigies of valour at that memorable battle. Subsequent to the peace, under whose olive branches Europe at length reposed from the previous exhaustion and turmoil of contest, Albert, disliking the inactive and idle life to which the sons of Mars are destined when not employed on actual service, left "the gentle chiefs of gay parade," and retired on half-pay, resolving, that, should war again raise its blood-stained standard, he would then resume the soldier's life ; and, being gifted with intellectual abilities of the first order, he designed to gratify the thirst for knowledge, usually attendant on the possession of those qualities, by travelling through countries sanctified to the memory of the scholar, by classic and historical associations. In consequence of such a determination, Albert Tyrconnell had resided in Italy for the last three years, occasionally making excursions into the adjacent states. Report said, that personal beauty was added to the endowments we have already particularized,

but notwithstanding all the renown with which Fame's hundred voices had invested the youthful hero, Sir Hugh never betrayed the slightest desire to see his nephew, and usually appeared distressed, whenever his merits formed the subject of conversation. The result was, that Albert's deserts were more recognized in the wide sphere of general society, than in the confined circle of the neighbourhood of the parsonage. Sir Hugh's title, in case he never married, was ultimately to descend to his nephew, but the fortune, not being entailed, was consequently at the Baronet's disposal.

Time had rolled on, and its meliorating influence had much blunted the edge of Sir Hugh's grief; he even occasionally indulged in gleams of gaiety, but as often relapsed into serious sadness, into the blank repose of stagnated feeling.

Having now formally sketched the early part of Sir Hugh's history, we shall proceed to describe the interview of the Baronet with Mr St Albe, Mrs Eleanor Fitzroy, and our

heroine, who was a first rate favourite, and, indeed, one of the very few of the fair sex ever permitted to visit a mansion rarely entered, Tyrconnell Castle.

CHAPTER IV.

ON announcing their names, Mr St Albe, his sister, and daughter, were immediately admitted. They found Sir Hugh in his study, seated in a great chair at a table covered with books and papers, and wrapped in a long blue silk *robe de chambre*.

A large Newfoundland dog slept at his feet. The noise of the party's entrance disturbed his slumbers; Cæsar growled, and bounded forward to reconnoitre the intruders, but quickly perceiving they were old acquaintances, he wagged his tail, and quietly returned to his former station.

“Cæsar, unlike mankind, is ever faithful to his trust,” cried Sir Hugh; “but seeing you, my kind friends,” he added, “half re-

conciles me to this naughty world of ours.—Izzy, my love, your appearance, like the light of the sun, always banishes gloom and disperses darkness, and you have just arrived in time to redeem me from a fit of misanthropy.—Now come, Mrs Eleanor, acknowledge that, for an old bachelor, who has gained his grand climacteric, such an address is particularly gallant.”

“Pre-eminently so,” she replied. “Really, Sir Hugh, one would imagine you were but just emancipated from the gay empire of folly and fashion.”

“Thank Heaven! it is many a long year,” exclaimed the Baronet, “since I traversed its deceptive paths, strewed, ’tis true, with roses, under which lurk many piercing thorns.”

“*Point de rose sans épines,*” rejoined Isabel. “Now, dear Sir Hugh, do let me try the sol-like influence, with which you have so flatteringly endowed me, to banish the foul fiend, misanthropy—

“Hence to the realms of night, dire demon, hence !
Thy chain of adamant can bind
That little world, the human mind,
And sink its noblest powers to impotence !”

she sportively added in a theatrical tone ; then turning to her father, who had been busily employed in looking over a book of plates, she exclaimed, “Are you too going to turn contemplative philosopher ? Papa, will you not assist me in the management of this, my magic wand, with whose potent touch I intend to metamorphose a cynical Diogenes into a *preux chevalier, sans peur et sans reproche* ?” —saying which, she laughingly brandished the Baronet’s gold-headed cane, as she gently touched his shoulder, and dubbed him her sworn knight.

“Izzy ! there is no resisting your infectious gaiety,” returned Sir Hugh, with a faint smile. “St Albe, do you not attribute her delightful spirits as much to the invigorating effect of the unpolluted atmosphere of the country, to early hours, and the rational mode of life you pursue, far’ from ‘the din of

cities,' and 'the busy hum of men,' as to constitutional temperament?"

"There is no doubt but that dissipation tends to enervate mental powers, as well as to depress animal spirits," rejoined Mr St Albe; "but of that Isabel will soon be able to judge from experience. We have this day received an invitation to spend a short time in London with Lady Belville; and as I wish my daughter to become acquainted with the members of her uncle's family, we have accepted the offer, and I mean to be her *cicisbéo* to town myself."

"Izzy going to London!" exclaimed the Baronet; "to that mart of extravagance, that sink of iniquity, where pleasure and wickedness go hand in hand to lure their victims to destruction! Impossible, St Albe! you cannot be serious?"

"Perfectly so. The dangers you speak of attend our sex in a much greater degree than the fairer part of creation. Lady Belville alludes to the possibility of visiting Paris at a later period of the year, for the purpose of

there meeting Lord Belville and her son ; but whether Isabel shall avail herself of that part of the invitation or not, future circumstances must determine."

" Worse and worse ! Paris as well as London !" muttered the Baronet, as with hasty steps he traversed his study. " But I have no right to dictate. Isabel, come here ; let me," he continued, in a tone of voice tremulous from emotion, as he placed her in front of the window, and laid his hands on her shoulders, " let me take a last view of ' this cunningest pattern of excelling nature,' ere the world has robbed her of all her blooming freshness, both of mind and person. Poor frail one ! Soon, too soon, will you be reduced to the ordinary level of your miserable sex, whose business 'tis

" To sing, to dance,
To dress, and troul the tongue, and roll the eye,"

for man's applause ; too soon will you become that ' light unmeaning thing, that smiles on all and weeps with none.' "

“ Oh, do not say so !” replied Isabel, inexpressibly affected. “ Never shall I forget you,—never shall I stoop to the degradation you have predicted,—never shall I cease to venerate the friends with whom Heaven has blessed me !”

“ Be your errors what they may hereafter,” said the Baronet, with a heavy sigh, “ you may ever rank me amongst that number. Izzy ! my own Izzy ! farewell !—God for ever bless you !—I am now more calm. Pardon the irritation of feeling your abrupt departure occasioned.—St Albe, your hand. Mrs Eleanor, am I forgiven ?”

“ Where no fault has been committed, no pardon can be granted ; besides,” she added with a smile, “ you shall constantly hear from me the progress of Isabel in the predicted road to ruin. I am to remain at the parsonage ; and, notwithstanding all the scandal which *tête-a-tête* visits between a spinster of fifty and a beau of the *vieille cour* may occasion, I shall e’en ‘ brave the world’s dread laugh,’ and often perform the part of a walk-

ing gazette to Tyrconnell Castle, to discuss domestic politics by your fire-side. And now, brother, I believe we must depart. Come, no more of what the French call *scenes*. Isabel, one kiss to the Baronet.—There—*Al-lons !*” said Mrs Eleanor with affected gaiety.

Cæsar, as if aware of the approaching separation, jumped up, and fawned affectionately on Isabel.

“ Even Cæsar feels !” cried Sir Hugh.

Isabel did not trust herself with a reply ; but, raising her humid eyes, she expressively pressed the Baronet’s hand ; and, without venturing another glance, with her father and aunt she precipitately left the apartment, and, in a musing and melancholy mood, accompanied them back to the parsonage.

CHAPTER V.

THE important day of departure at length arrived. Isabel, her father, and Mrs Eleanor, assembled round that breakfast table, which was soon to be deserted by relatives so mutually dear. Each struggled to suppress the rising tear, but the blanched cheek, and quivering lip of our heroine, betrayed her inward emotion.

Common-place conversation was attempted without success. The rattling of the carriage-wheels announced the dreaded moment. The sound went to Isabel's heart ; and, in that instant, she almost regretted having accepted an invitation, whose anticipated pleasures she felt already dearly purchased.

“ It will be but for a short time, my Isa-

bel!" exclaimed the worthy Mrs Eleanor in a soothing tone; but her frame tottered with the deep emotion of feeling, rather than the tremor of age, as she advanced to the chair, on which Isabel seemed absolutely petrified, and said, "Rise, my beloved girl! and embrace me ere we part, I trust to meet again."

Isabel mechanically arose, for she seemed under the dominion of that inward grief "which passeth show," while, at the same moment, the parlour door opened, and a train of faithful domestics appeared assembled, to catch a last view of their beloved mistress. Many of her poor pensioners were also there, whose weeping eyes testified their sympathy; and a little child, clinging to its mother's knees, just then softly whispered,—“Is she going away for ever?” The question, the scene, gave relief to Isabel's surcharged feelings,—she burst into an agony of tears,—threw herself into her aunt's arms,—again and again repeated the fond embrace;—extended her hands to the numerous group which surrounded her, and faintly articulating, “God

bless you !”—was conveyed by her father into the carriage, which soon whirled them far from a spot, consecrated to their united remembrances by the heart's best recollections.

There is an elasticity in the youthful mind, which happily enables it soon to rise under the pressure of unpleasant feelings, and to conquer the tide of melancholy ideas they create. Providence has mercifully ordained that such impressions in the juvenile mind are rarely of long duration. Were it not so, how gloomy would be the appearance of life, even at its very portal ! Could we anticipate the evils to which “flesh is heir,” should we not join in the language of the moralist, and say, “Who would wish to see fourscore ?” But, by a happy organization of feeling in the morning of existence, imagination is enabled to deck surrounding objects with its own vivid colouring,—to tint them with its own illusive brightness. Like the glittering veil of the prophet in Lalla Rookh, fair to the eye, which did not penetrate beneath its folds to discover deformity, is the deceptive curtain of early

life ; but when lifted by the hand of experience, say, What does it reveal ? Let those who are acquainted with the world's wiles reply to that question. But Isabel had not yet trodden its paths. The beautiful description Madame de Staël gives of the sentiments of the ancients, in her work on Literature, had some analogy to those of our heroine : “ Les anciens,” says that charming author, “ étoient animés par une imagination enthousiaste, dont la méditation n’avoit point analysé les impressions. Ils prenoient possession de la terre non encore parcourüe, non encore décrite ; étonnés de chaque jouissance, de chaque production de la nature, ils y plaçoient un Dieu pour l’honorer, pour en assurer la durée.”

Isabel had all the same freshness of imagination thus described ; and, with the mutability of feeling attendant on life's dawn, the melancholy sensations occasioned by leaving friends so justly dear were gradually moderated, and insensibly mellowed to a lower tone. Fancy would now and then depict the glowing future ; and the quick succession of ob-

jects which travelling affords, together with her father's agreeable and instructive conversation, soon restored Isabel to composure, if not to gaiety. Mr St Albe, wishing to amuse his daughter's mind, suddenly let down the carriage window, and thus accosted his driver, who was a complete personification of the inimitable Larry Brady, so admirably delineated by Miss Edgeworth :

“ What a miserable sheep that is on the road side ; I hope we shall not see many in this part of the country to resemble it.”

“ Bad enough, *plase* your Honour,” answered Pat. “ Dear knows, I b’lieve as how ’tis dead, though ’tis standing, ochone !”

St Albe, though he had heard much of the effects of Galvanism, could not absolutely credit the assertion.

Pat continued, “ Och thin, your Honour, if I might be so bould as to axe the quistion, is it all the way to Lunnon your reverence intends to be after going ?”

“ Yes,” replied St Albe, “ such is my present determination.”

Pat scratched his head with one hand, while, with the reins in the other, he pulled up his worsted stocking. Seeing, however, that his auditors did not comprehend *the something* that was evidently passing in his mind, he added, with a knowing wink, his whole body turned round, and his arm resting on the window-frame of the carriage,—

“ Becaase, I was thinking, that if sich was your Honour’s intintion, ye might jist stay where yees be at present, and go to England in this bit of a nate po-chay ; for sorrow better from this to Lunnon town nor itself, any how ! Moreover, ’tis myself that wishes to see that mighty place, where the quality goes, for all the world, as if the divil was at their heels ; and thin, if yees take th’ advice I make so bould as to offer, why yees won’t have to do with say-sickness at all ! at all ! and sorrow worse thing nor that same, barring a fast from the cratur, your Honour.”

Isabel laughed outright. Pat, with that intuitive perception of ridicule which so remarkably distinguishes the Irish character, in-

stantly perceived himself the object of her mirth, and with an expression of comical shrewdness, he replied, to what he imagined was passing in her mind at the moment, touching his hat as he spoke,—

“Thin bad luck to me, Miss, if a drap ever wetted my whistle this blessed morning, nor e’er a day since my vow, last Candlemas.”

“But do you never indulge in a glass by night?” said Mr St Albe. Pat gave a cunning wink as he replied,—

“Och, thin, your Honour, ’tis myself that won’t be tilling a lie about that same, but the divil a sup by day, and, musha! more’s the pity; yit Patrick O’Flanagan isn’t the lad that will brake a vow when once it is made, any how! But it didn’t extind to the night, your Honour knows; so says I to Judy, Judy, says I, I’m jist thinking ye might lave a little cruskeen, with a drap of our own potteen, (bless the mark!) jist by my bed’s side, says I, and with that, the crature did as I bid her; so, in spite of Father Sullivan, and them spal-

peens of still hunters, together, I keeps up my spirits with a drap o' the rael sort, and 'tis kind for me, your Honour ; for 'tis well I riminber, afore I was born, my mither, rest her sowl ! jist tuk to the same, so small blame to her childer !”

Our heroine, who had had a caricature of Irish posting, now asked Pat, whether he had ever known a chaise thatched, or horses encouraged to proceed by the aid of a red-hot poker ?

“ Musha ! thin bad luck to me, Miss, if ever I seen a chay that was *tatched* in all my born days. And who ever dared for to say so ?” exclaimed Pat with indignation. “ Och, the scald herrings ! I wish they were here, and I'd show 'em the differ ; and as to the *bastes*, sorrow worse thing ever I seen done, than jist a bit of a wisp of straw burnt under their legs, to make 'em go on, the rogues !”

Then, as if to evince the superior mettle of his steeds, Pat cracked his whip, *chehupped* to the *bastes*, and being within view of the village where the travellers were to stop that

night, he redoubled his exertions to enter it in good style, it being always an object of ambition with an Irish *cocher* to astonish the *natives*, by a brilliant *finale*, worthy the imitation of that excellent and *useful* institution, the Four-in-hand Club.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN our travellers arrived at their place of destination, as the carriage stopped, they were assailed on all sides by unfortunate claimants, who solicited charity in the various notes of the Hibernian gamut. One had a wife, who, the night before, had presented him with twins; another, six *childer*, who had not broke their fast for four-and-twenty hours. In short, there was scarcely a misfortune in the catalogue of human misery that was not urged by the unfortunate creatures to elicit charity. Mr St Albe did feel for them, for, though conscious that many of the tales of woe he heard were fictitious, yet a few, he thought, were probably true, and not having time to inquire into the relative me-

rits of the cases thus stated, he dispensed some silver amongst the crowd.

Loud and voluble were the thanks that ensued, and, “Heaven bless his Honour! he’s a *rael jantleman*, and no paltry *negre*!” resounded from the assembled and motley group. Eager to escape from such eulogiums, Isabel and her father entered the inn, where, having ordered dinner, they made their escape through a back entrance, wishing to enjoy a quiet walk ere the culinary operations were completed.

The conversation turned on the miserable situation of the lower orders of the Irish.

“What can be the reason of the wretched state to which they are reduced?” inquired Isabel.

“Many and various are the causes,” answered Mr St Albe. “Generally speaking, numerous impediments concur to repress, rather than to excite, industry amongst the inhabitants of this unhappy country. The support of the established clergy, as well as that of their own priesthood, is a grievance of no trivial nature,

while the payment and unequal assessment of tithes certainly tends to discourage an agricultural spirit of improvement; for the more land a poor labourer cultivates, the more tithes he is obliged to pay. To be convinced of the opposite effects produced by a different mode of paying the clergy, we need only for a moment consider its beneficial results in Scotland. But tithes are not the only hardships under which this country groans. The restrictions established on the import and export of manufactures, injudicious taxation, and several other impediments, seem to obstruct and retard the progress of civilization in Ireland, as well as to inflame national prejudices and passions detrimental to the moral condition of her people, which a more efficient and suitable administration might control, or altogether eradicate. But the existing evils are of long and unabated duration, and a total change of system it would now be difficult, perhaps impossible, to accomplish; for it is, indeed, an arduous task to conquer a 'many-headed Hydra.' Besides, the constitutional defects to which I have alluded

may be politically necessary ; at all events, more practical logicians than we are, my Isabel, have hitherto unsuccessfully attempted to provide an antidote. We must, therefore, only hope, that the wisdom of government will ultimately discover an adequate remedy to diminish those hinderances, which, unfortunately, preclude the promotion of national industry and improvement. How often have I wished the legislature to enact some substituted impost, better adapted to the local circumstances of Ireland than that of tithe, even should it be an absentee tax, by the exaction of which, I myself should be a sufferer," Mr St Albe added with a smile.

" Most fervently I wish it was established," returned Isabel ; " for, would it not generally fall on the higher orders of society, on those persons who scrape their every potatoe in Ireland to spend the produce in the sister kingdom ? And, Oh ! how different would be the state of ' the Emerald Isle,' if the great territorial proprietors continued to reside, at least, a part of the year on their own estates, instead

of destroying the confidence which ought to exist between landlord and tenant, by leaving them to the management of *middlemen*, a class of people who too frequently have proved the scourges of this neglected land. Do you not think, Papa, that the natural endowments of the Irish are very superior?"

"Most certainly;—it is, therefore, the more sincerely to be regretted, that public education is not conducted on a higher and more liberal scale, and that such a country as Ireland should labour under any political disadvantages. Genius and talent are bestowed on this nation with a liberal hand; for, without subscribing to the assertion of an historian, who says, 'That the Hibernians were a flourishing people when the Israelites were making bricks for the Egyptians;' yet we must allow, that whilst other regions were buried in the gloom and ignorance of the dark ages, literature flourished in this favoured isle, though certainly, in a great degree, under the thralldom of superstition. The sort of corrupted Latin which the peasantry, in some parts of

the south of Ireland, at this moment speak, and which they have generally learned by tradition alone, bears presumptive testimony to the truth of their claims to intellectual superiority in ancient days. But, to draw proofs of more modern date, to evince the capabilities of this nation, we need only look at the present administration of England, and we shall perceive, that the statesmen of the strongest intellect, the most sparkling eloquence, and the greatest diplomatic talents,—in short, those who hold the very helm of the constitution, have drawn their first breath of existence in that country, which produced, in the literary and forensic worlds, a Sheridan, a Moore, a Burke, a Grattan, and a Curran; and in the field, the immortal Wellington, and a long train of military heroes, supremely distinguished in the brilliant annals of glory and of fame.”

“ You have omitted many illustrious names in your eminent catalogue,” replied Isabel.

“ I am conscious that I have,” said Mr St Albe; “ but to enumerate the constellation of

genius, the splendid luminaries Ireland has produced, I may say, in the words of the poet,—

‘ To tell ’em would an hundred tongues require,
Or one vain wit’s, that might an hundred tire.’

And now, lest I should be accounted the latter personage, I think, my Isabel, we had better forbear any further political discussions, and return to partake of the roast mutton I have ordered, which, I think, will be acceptable to travellers’ appetites.”

“ Agreed ;—but look, Papa, here is a more intellectual bill of fare than that to which you have alluded,—no less than the announcement of the performance of Kotzebue’s play of *The Stranger* in this place to-night. Really my feminine curiosity is all on the *qui vive*. Shall we adjourn to its representation after dinner ?”

“ I have not the slightest objection,” answered Mr St Albe ; “ but let us first satisfy the cravings of corporeal hunger, ere we seek

to gratify the more sublime anxiety for ‘ attic nights, and refectons of the gods.’ ”

Indulging such playful *badinage*, Mr St Albe and his daughter entered their inn, for we cannot dignify it by the more fashionable term of hotel.

CHAPTER VII.

IN consequence of the determination announced in the preceding chapter, our travellers, after dinner, sallied forth to witness the sacrifice offered at the shrine of the tragic muse, by the votaries of Melpomene.

The temple in which those rites were paid had formerly been a barn, but was now distinguished by the title of Temporary Theatre, where the silver-toned voice of Mrs Haller was destined to raise its dulcet notes, instead of the more rural, but not equally harmonious sound of a threshing-machine! In compliance with the most approved rules of ancient architecture, the building was void of windows; but ventilation being considered in some degree necessary, circular *holes* had been

industriously cut in the mud walls of the classic edifice, in order to admit a free current of air. Such a beneficent intention had, however, been absolutely frustrated, by the ardent thirst for information, and insatiable curiosity to witness the representation of dramatic poetry, evinced by the younger sons of Erin; for, through every opening in the clay-built structure forth peeped the ruddy countenance of a juvenile adventurer, who had climbed the temple of the muses to witness the histrionic talents displayed in the interior. In vain the manager, dressed in a frieze coat, and armed with a *shelelah*, cried with Stentorian lungs, (shaking his rod of power at the same time,) "Get out of that, you gossoon you, or, by St Patrick, I'll be at you!"

Hibernian courage is not easily daunted, and the valiant heroes continued to retain the stations they had gained, undismayed by all "the insolence of office." Remonstrance the manager found at length in vain, and the intruders were permitted to enjoy their situations unmolested. The theatre (if so it must

be termed) was crowded to excess, when Mr St Albe and his daughter entered, and was dimly lighted by six halfpenny candles stuck in a board, the wicks of which were occasionally tipped by the expert fingers of the person who officiated in the double capacity of manager and candle-snuffer.

With that innate politeness, which certainly distinguishes, in an extraordinary degree, the Irish peasantry, on our travellers making their appearance, an instant commotion took place. “Make way for the *genteels!*” resounded on all sides, while seats were immediately resigned, and thankfully accepted by our heroine and her father. A clap for “*their Honours*” ensued, after which the performance commenced. We shall not trespass on our reader’s patience, by a minute detail of all its originalities; but a few circumstances we cannot forbear relating. The principal actress unfortunately laboured under a distressing asthmatic complaint, and at the moment the Stranger exclaimed,—“Hark! I hear her silver-toned voice,” she was seized with such

a violent fit of coughing, that the possibility of her appearing on the stage was utterly precluded. In vain the tragic hero strutted, raved, and raged, waving the insignia of woe in the form of a cotton pocket handkerchief, edged with blue!—while now he raised his eyes “in a fine frenzy rolling,”—now stamped the boards, which echoed his steps with portentous sound, and, following the example of his more enlightened contemporaries of the buskin, exerted his arms with the dignified motion of a pump,—now raised, now abased. Still no heroine appeared. The asthmatic tempest, loud and deep, yet raged. At length it ceased. The unhappy actress’s powers, natural and dramatic, were completely exhausted. Mrs Haller, however, made a last grand effort, as she rushed upon the stage with tragic heroism, and threw herself, “nothing loth,” into the Stranger’s embrace.

Spirit of the immortal Kotzebue! didst thou witness the catastrophe? The boards, which had only been laid across the temporary arena, lost their equilibrium. The reunit-

ed pair experienced a *capsize*, equal to any ever effected by the harlequin of a Christmas pantomime ; and the blanket curtain, loosened from the wooden peg, which had hitherto restrained its undulating folds, fell amidst a thunder of applause, superior to the approbation, long and loud, ever elicited by the united powers of a Liston and a Mathews.

The tears of the fair Hibernians (which the former sufferings of the hero and heroine of the piece had caused to flow profusely) were “impeded in their progress, by the wrinkle of laughter ;” and Isabel could distinguish Patrick O’Flanagan, who had also fully sympathised in their prior misfortunes, now exclaiming in his true national accent,—

“Och, thin divil take me, if ever I seen a finer comedy *nor* this same tragedy in all my born days.”

In so saying, Mr O’Flanagan evinced truer criticism, than often resounds from the benches of a more enlightened assembly.

CHAPTER VIII.

WITHOUT meeting any further adventures, tragic or otherwise, our travellers, on the third day of their departure from the parsonage, arrived in Dublin. Isabel had never been in the Irish, nor indeed any other metropolis ; her delighted astonishment was therefore proportionably great, on entering a capital, whose architectural beauty is so decidedly superior. With animated surprise, she asked her father whether the public buildings in London could possibly vie in splendour with those of Dublin.

“ I will not answer your question,” returned Mr St Albe, “ as I do not wish to prejudice the judgment you will soon be enabled to form by comparison. Few edifices, however, can boast the same chasteness of architecture

which that building possesses," he continued, pointing to the Bank of Ireland, (formerly the Parliament House,) which they were at that moment passing.

"It is indeed supremely beautiful," replied Isabel ; "but, when I reflect that those walls, that once resounded to the brilliant eloquence of a Grattan, a Curran, and the splendid phalanx of Irish orators, *now* echo but the numerical calculations of hireling clerks, I am ready to exclaim, what a glorious monument of our national degradation."

"You forget, my Isabel, that you are addressing an Englishman," said Mr St Albe. "You, it is true, may lay claim to being a daughter of Erin, having been born and educated in 'the green isle of the ocean.' I must therefore pardon the *amor patriæ* which prompted the termination of your last reply."

"Were you to speak your genuine sentiments, I rather think they would coincide with mine, in reprobating the measure of the Union, a measure so destructive to the national dignity and prosperity of Ireland, and from

which, as far as I can understand, not many actual benefits have hitherto resulted."

"Let us hope, my love, that the favourable effects to be derived from such a cause will yet appear. At all events, it is useless and criminal to spend our thoughts on retrospective regrets, which only render the mind discontented and unhappy. We ought to endeavour to employ well the present time, rather than deplore the past, that cannot be recalled."

"If Sir Hugh Tyrconnell was here," rejoined Isabel playfully, "how ably he would support me! He would say you were trying by sophistry to gild the chains wherewith we are bound, without lightening them of one single link. But I shall hold no further parley with such a true John Bull," she added, sportively touching her father's cheek; "particularly as we are now arrived at our hotel, and I must instantly write to acquaint aunt Eleanor how much of our journey we have safely accomplished. In the meantime, Papa, you will make all necessary arrangements at the Packet Of-

fice, for, as you have promised, that, at some future period, you will allow me an opportunity to investigate the *Lions* of this beautiful metropolis, I must endeavour to submit gracefully to the necessity which, you tell me, occasions our immediate departure for England."

"Did it not exist I should willingly gratify your laudable curiosity, my dear Isabel, by remaining here a few days; but my doing so would really be attended with inconvenience. I, therefore, think we shall sail this evening. Is the wind fair?" said Mr St Albe, addressing a waiter.

"Perfectly so, Sir," returned the man.

"At six o'clock then, Isabel, prepare to say, 'My native land, good night!'"

"Willingly, for my patriotism does not extend so far as to destroy the pleasurable anticipations a visit to London is calculated to excite. I shall retire to address my epistle to the parsonage. Adieu, then, *au revoir!*"

CHAPTER IX.

AT the appointed hour, Mr St Albe and his daughter proceeded from their hotel to the Pigeon-House, from whence they were to embark. The wind proving favourable, they instantly went on board the packet, and in a short time were wafted far from the crowded shore. Isabel took a station next her father on deck, resolving to remain there until the horrors of sea-sickness should compel her to descend.

As yet there was only just breeze enough to fill the sails ; the vessel glided gently on the blue bosom of the deep, scarcely rippling its glassy surface—

“ And calmly walked the waves, a thing of life.”

A bright evening sun illuminated with its parting rays the surrounding scenery, and beautifully touched the swelling canvass with its golden beams. The gorgeous canopy of many-tinted clouds, usually attendant on that luminary's setting, now floated in aërial magnificence over the summits of the Wicklow mountains, whose unbroken lines appeared to peculiar advantage, reposing in all the luxury of reflected light. It was a scene worthy the pencil of a Claude to delineate, and as the glorious orb sunk beneath the horizon, and to fancy's eye seemed retiring to quench its effulgent lustre in the watery element, while streams of brilliant light flooded the atmosphere, and dyed the western clouds with the most vivid lines of purple crimson and burnished gold, the finest harmonies of nature appeared assembled, to aid, by their picturesque effect, that sentiment of perfect beauty, which the Bay of Dublin must ever suggest to the mind capable of appreciating its sublime charms. Isabel, as she bade adieu to her native shores, exulted in the prospect.

It was the hour when day and darkness meet, and she would gladly have remained on deck, to witness the effect of the last retreating beams of day, growing fainter and fainter still, and now leaving large masses of shade in that indistinct and mysterious light, so dear to imagination, whilst other projecting points of the mountain scenery caught the receding rays—she would willingly have staid till twilight grey had “in her sober livery all things clad,” but that Mr St Albe advanced and said,—

“My dear Isabel, I must disturb the poetic reveries I doubt not your lively fancy suggests, for I fear you will take cold, and must insist on your descending to the cabin.”

“My ideas, I confess,” said Isabel, “were at that moment rather romantic; but who could look on such a scene unmoved, or without becoming better from its contemplation? I was thinking,” she added, with a smile, as she remarked the playful irony of her fa-

ther's countenance, " I was thinking of those exquisite lines of Moore's,

" And as I mark the line of light that plays
Along the smooth wave t'ward the burning west,
I long to tread that golden path of rays,
And think 'twould lead to some bright isle of rest."

" Or of the equally beautiful, and, indeed, analogous description of your favourite De Staël, who says, ' When at eve, at the boundary of the landscape, the heavens appear to recline so closely on the earth, imagination pictures beyond the horizon an asylum of hope, a native land of love, and nature seems silently to repeat, that Man is immortal.' But come, you know I am an enemy to bright imaginings too long indulged. Let us, therefore, my Isabel, exchange the visionary isle of rest for the necessary repose (if repose it can be called) of a birth on board a Holyhead packet."

Isabel laughingly acceded to her father's proposal, as she descended the narrow stair-

case which led to the cabin, where such a different scene awaited her, as quickly dispelled "the thick coming fancies" she had previously been led, by association, to indulge.

CHAPTER X.

To those who have ever witnessed the heterogeneous miseries, that epitome of human wretchedness, the cabin of a packet exhibits, any attempt at description of its manifold inconveniences would be superfluous. But to those whom a mania for seeing the world may never have tempted to quit their own firesides to encounter the dangers of the treacherous ocean, the picture, ludicrous in retrospection, but horrible in reality, that now presented itself to our heroine, may not be uninteresting.

The cabin was crowded to excess. Men, women, and children, in happy confusion, appeared there, bound to wend their weary pilgrimage o'er the water's deep.

From one birth an old gentleman popped

out his wrinkled physiognomy, exclaiming, "Captain, how many knots an hour does she now go?"

From another, a pale-faced damsel of sixteen exhibited her cadaverous countenance, while her feeble voice faintly articulated the words, "Steward! Steward!" as exhausted she sunk almost senseless on her pillow.

In one corner of the vessel lay extended an elderly man, wrapped in an immense boat-cloak, whose sea-faring appearance bore testimony to his having weathered many a gale, and who, therefore, scrupled not to disturb those few passengers who were disposed to enjoy the influence of Somnus, by the sonorous reverberations of his nasal organs.

In another, a Dandy, whose officious lacquey had just unlaced his stays, lay attitudinizing his "fashionable length of limb," albeit *bon gré, mal gré*, occasionally obliged to forego picturesque situations, for those which unrelenting sea-sickness compelled him to assume.

Immediately opposite was a Belle, who, although a little *passé*, was still bent on mis-

chief, and who zealously endeavoured to use the few weapons nature had given, and time had left, valiantly to destroy the lords of the creation.

She now ogled the Beau with the utmost desperation and assiduity ; but, alas ! we are constrained to acknowledge with little success.

Lord Byron says, that sea-sickness is the most effectual cure for love, and we are inclined to credit his Lordship's assertion.

“ Good Heavens ! ” cried the Dandy, “ how does the enemy go ? If ever I am tempted to venture amongst the wild Irish again, may I be — . ” We shall spare our readers the asseveration with which that sprig of ton closed his sentence.

“ It really is quite dreadful, ” exclaimed the Belle, who, having adjusted her *coëffe de nuit* by the aid of a pocket-glass, now drew open her dimity curtains, and displayed a French night-cap, lined with pink, and trimmed with ribbon to correspond. “ Fanny, bring me my salts, *un peu d'eau de Cologne*.

Oh mon Dieu, que c'est horrible ! Our passage from Calais was nothing to this. Captain, is there any danger ?” cried the fair one, in a hysterical tone, as the vessel gave a slight heave. “ If there is, pray throw the carriage overboard ! *Mais—per amor de St Antonio !* bring me *Fidèle*,” screamed the travelled lady, as a large French poodle dog at that moment made its appearance. “ *Là, restez tranquille idol mio !*” she continued, as her hand, decorated with superb rings, patted the animal’s neck, while those “ speculative instruments,” the eyes, were directed to the Dandy’s birth, who, secure in native insensibility, courageously resisted her soul-subduing glances.

Meanwhile, *Fidèle*, encouraged to more than usual audacity, by the familiar tenderness of his mistress, proceeded from one demonstration of affection to another, till, in a luckless moment, he leaped at the fair one’s head, and, in the violent eagerness of joy, too great to be restrained by prudential considerations, he tore off the French night-cap, rib-

bons, and artificial ringlets of his unhappy mistress, and, with a loud bark, indicative of his triumph at such a superior feat of dexterity, precipitated them into the middle of the cabin floor, whilst the enraged Belle, in an agony of feeling too great for utterance, dashed Fidèle after them, who, with canine sagacity, perceiving he had been guilty of *some* fault, whined, drooped his tail, and, fain to take refuge from further indignity, shrunk quietly into a corner.

“ Petrify me ! ” exclaimed the Dandy, “ if I ever witnessed a more charming *dénouement* ; those tresses and *bonnet de nuit* are quite *magnifique*,” he continued, as he inspected Fidèle’s spoils through his glass with the eye of a connoisseur, and then raised it to the birth of the infuriated Belle, who, not thinking herself in a becoming attire for an hysteric fit, now with one hand endeavouring to close the obstinate curtains, and with the other covering her despoiled pate, after many ineffectual efforts, at length succeeded in screening herself from further scrutiny.

“ *Venez ici pauvre chien !* ” exclaimed the Dandy, extending his delicately white hand to Fidèle, who, however, with the utmost pertinacity, resisted for some time the amicable overtures. At length, condescending to creep from his place of shelter, he again ventured into the area of his former misfortune, and approached the beau ; but, quickly perceiving the exquisite’s stays, which lay concealed from vulgar eyes, in the corner of the birth, Fidèle instantly seized the whalebone armour, which he imagined the polished thief had purloined from his mistress, and willing to make his peace by the restoration of such a valuable article of attire, with a bound of delight, and an expression of countenance beaming triumph, great as that of the Roman conqueror when he exclaimed, “ *Veni, vidi, vici !* ” the victorious Fidèle jumped, barked, and frisked about the cabin, displaying the Dandy’s stays to the amused spectators.

The beau, enraged beyond the power of concealment, forgot the affected quietude which dandyism enjoins, and swore, cursed,

and vented his fury in a thousand execrations against belles, valets, stays, and dogs ; dashed a bottle of sal volatile, a silver essence box, and gold tooth-pick case, successively after the happy Fidèle, who, regarding such attacks with the usual *sang froid* dogs bestow upon puppies, continued, without the slightest interruption, his frantic demonstrations of delight and agility.

Notwithstanding the previous sufferings of the Belle, which ought to have induced her to sympathise in the Beau's distress, yet, with that perversion of feeling which Rochefoucault says makes us take pleasure even in the misfortunes of our best friends, she now for once yielded to the influence of nature, indulged and joined in the general laugh, and from a corner of her birth, exclaimed, in the affected voice of the hero of the corset, " Petrify me ! if I ever saw a more charming *dénouement* !"

Although amused with the scene she had witnessed, Isabel felt herself obliged to retire to her hammock, where, a martyr to the pre-

vailing indisposition, she remained perfectly quiet, until the welcome sound of "Land! land!" announced their arrival at the destined haven,—Holyhead.

CHAPTER XI.

AFTER a few hours rest and refreshment on *terra firma*, Mr St Albe and his daughter entered their carriage, determined to proceed without further loss of time to London. Their route lay through the romantic region of North Wales, where the astonishing beauties of the scenery elicited Isabel's warmest encomiums.

"Nature here seems to have indulged her sublimest fantasies," said Mr St Albe. "Look what a stupendous fabric, not reared with mortal hands, that mountain exhibits!"

"And that magnificent ruin also which frowns yonder in awful majesty," rejoined Isabel.

"Yet, you will soon, my love, see antiquat-

ed dowagers, nay, young women too, who prefer the verdure of a card-table to that of the Welsh Mountains, and the sight of Great Casino to the grand ruin of Conway Castle!" said Mr St Albe with a smile.

"Can such depravity of taste exist in this enlightened age?" demanded Isabel.

"I have sometimes thought," returned her father, "that we imagine the human mind to have made greater advances towards perfectibility than is warranted by experience, and it has often appeared problematical to me, whether the system of education now generally adopted tends to expand the intellectual powers many degrees beyond that which it is the fashion to revile and abjure."

"Dearest father, how can you think so? Pope, in his Imitations of Horace, says, with the utmost astonishment,—

'Our wives read Milton, and our daughters plays!'

But the time is surely past, when such mental feats could excite the surprise or the ridicule of the monopolizing *literati*. It is no longer

in vogue to judge our sex on Mahometan principles, and to imagine women without souls or minds ! On the contrary, in the present day we are raised to our proper level in society. If a female possesses genius, it is usually cultivated, nor is it deemed necessary to confine her ideas to Glasse's Cookery, or the abstruse studies of tent stitch and embroidery, which formed the occupations of our great-grandmothers."

"Granted," replied Mr St Albe. "But, Isabel, those were feminine and social employments. If learning, accomplishments, and those lovely duties which dignify retirement, and enliven 'the fane of the domestic hearth,' were united in the present system of education, the grand desideratum would then, I allow, be gained. But, tell me, whether has a man a greater chance of happiness, married to a woman, who, as Iago says, is only

'Fit to suckle fools, and chronicle small beer ;'

or to one of those female philosophers, who, gleaning the superficies of literature, imagines

herself learned, when absolutely ignorant,—one who retains the shadow, but not the substance—one who studies Euclid, until she arrives at *the asses' bridge*, where congeniality of sentiment obliges her to stop—

‘A fellow feeling makes us wond’rous kind’—

or else discharges Galvanic batteries at her *caro sposo's pericranium*, whenever he ventures to show sufficient *caloric* to dispute the sovereign will and pleasure of his gentle help-mate?”

“What a picture of connubial bliss!” exclaimed Isabel, laughing. “An admirable modern writer says, that the information a female pedant sports is like the *appliquée* of the embroiderer,—it forms no part of the stuff; but you, of all men in the world, I should have imagined the least likely to condemn refinement and intellectual endowments in woman.”

“Mistake me not,” rejoined Mr St Albe in a serious tone. “No person can be more sensible of the advantages to be derived from

the cultivation of female talent than I am. I would have ‘Heaven’s last, best gift,’ the companion, not the mere plaything, the toy of man’s caprice ; and though I am not exactly the disciple of that philosophy which says there is no sex in souls, yet I am most willing to allow, that, although woman is generally inferior to man in solidity and depth of judgment, yet that, in imagination, and the lighter graces of the mind, she far excels the lords of the creation. I am inclined to imagine that the same difference exists in the mental as in the physical powers of the sexes. Man, strong, bold, persevering, dares to climb the very heights of literature, and to sound its profoundest abysses. Woman, sensitive, retiring, imaginative, attractive, covers its most rugged paths with the flowers of fancy, and, with a sort of intuitive perception, often discovers by a glance, what man, with infinite trouble, has laboured to deduce with logical precision. She is not always to be trusted,” said St Albe with a smile, “when she treats on abstruse points of science, or enters too far

into the wide field of metaphysical disquisition, where she sometimes makes

‘ The worse appear
The better reason, to perplex and dash
Maturest counsels :’

But in works of imagination, in delineating beauty of sentiment, and in exciting the sympathy of our heart’s best feelings, woman reigns triumphant ! We often regard with more pleasure the graceful tendrils of the vine, than the vigorous strength of the tree which it embellishes.”

“ After such an *amende honorable* for previous insinuation,” said Isabel, “ I need no longer assume the part of my sex’s champion ; but, with such an opinion of the natural powers of the female mind, why object, dear Papa, to its receiving the culture of improvement ?”

“ Isabel, I do not object ;—on the contrary, I am the strongest advocate for female education being intellectual as well as ornamental. What I *do* condemn is, that our fair spinsters are not taught enough ;—they are generally mere ‘ foragers on others’ wisdom ;’ and only

sip the Pierian spring, which just serves to intoxicate them with the idea of having attained the pinnacle of science, whereas they are still grovelling at its very base. A woman who is really well informed will, in truth, only discover her own ignorance ; for the more extensive her researches are, the more evidently she will perceive and acknowledge her own deficiency ; while the very conviction of all that yet remains to be acquired in the inexhaustible mine of literature must infallibly repel presumption, and repress the arrogance of self-conceit. At the same time, I must allow, that not even the modesty of genius can prevent the possessor from occasionally feeling an internal superiority to the herd of shallow triflers, with whom it will be her lot to associate in the every-day intercourse of private life. A highly gifted woman may, nay, she must, feel herself superior to the general level of her female associates ; but if she has good sense, she will never display that consciousness. In the education I have given you, my Isabel, I have proved that I wish it to be con-

ducted on the loftiest principles ; but I would have the statue beautiful as well as the adorning drapery ; for it is the pedant who

‘ Digests not into sense her motley meal,’

and not the intellectual female, who has given that disgust to the idea of a woman receiving any degree of classical erudition ; and so great, in consequence, is the prejudice the men entertain against *learned ladies*, that, my Isabel, if you mean to be popular, you must conceal many of those endowments with which you are gifted, or else you will be envied and persecuted by your own sex, and ridiculed by many of mine, as a member of the Blue-Stocking sisterhood, and consequently a *precieuse ridicule* of that valuable community.”

“ I shall neither take pains to display nor to conceal my very trifling stock of knowledge ; for I cannot think that a man of real information and talent could object to the acquisition of the former, or the cultivation of the latter of those qualities, provided they are not encumbered by pretension or affectation ; and, as to

the opinions of simpletons, they are surely of little consequence. Pope, you know, says,

‘ All fools have still an itching to deride,
And fain would be upon the laughing side.’

Now, as to my own sex, I cannot imagine myself of sufficient importance to create either envy or persecution amongst them. But, Papa,” she added in a gayer tone, “do you recollect what Lady Mary Wortley Montague says? — ‘To acknowledge the truth, I have never had any great esteem for the fair sex; and my only consolation for being of that gender, has been the assurance it gave me of never being married to any one among them.’— Now, think not that I am of her Ladyship’s opinion; but, really, the quotation being a little *à-propos*, I could not forbear making it.”

“You are a very saucy girl for having done so, and deserve all the warfare yon may hereafter meet,” said her father sportively, as he regarded with looks of affection his beloved child. And now, leaving our travellers to

enjoy their pleasures *sub silentio*, we shall permit them to continue their journey to London, as we wish to record a circumstance relative to Sir Hugh Tyrconnell, which we shall proceed to communicate in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

THE day after the departure of Mr St Albe and his daughter from the parsonage, as Mrs Eleanor and Sir Hugh were sitting by the fireside of the latter, an epistle was brought in, bearing the foreign post-mark of Geneva, and directed to the Baronet. It proved to be from his nephew, and run thus :

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I trust you will forgive my intruding on your time at present, as an unexpected circumstance compels me to address you, which, were its peculiar concomitants known, would, I think, plead my excuse for the trespass of which I am guilty, as well as for the request

I am going to urge. The latter, I am conscious, may appear extraordinary, and was it in my power I should feel it due to myself, and also to you, Sir, to particularize the reasons which impel me to entreat that the five thousand pounds, deputed to your care by my late father, may be forwarded to me without delay, as unexpected exigencies imperatively oblige me to request the remittance of a sum, which for six months hence I shall not have a right legally to demand ; but I sincerely regret that causes, of a private nature, preclude my assigning any motive, save *necessity*, for the favour I have ventured to solicit.

“ I have the honour to remain,

“ Dear Sir,

“ Your very obedient,

“ ALBERT TYRCONNELL.”

“ A chip of the old block !” exclaimed the Baronet, in a violent passion, as he finished the perusal of the above epistle, which, with the utmost indignation, he dashed on a table. “ A pretty modest request, truly ! Five thousand

pounds ! the sum total of all the fellow possesses upon earth, with the exception of a paltry hereditary income. Gambling debts, or debts of *honour*, as they are called, I suppose, instigated the extravagant fool to this proceeding ; but, no wonder that his father's son should act so. 'Zounds ! 'tis enough to set a man mad to witness such conduct ; yet, 'tis the way of the world ; and then the high tone of his letter, forsooth !—He condescends, indeed, to *entreat* a sum, which, for six months hence, he will not have a right *legally* to demand. Aye, aye ! the only sensible thing his father ever did, was not to constitute the youngster of age till five-and-twenty. ' Peculiar causes preclude his assigning any motive, save *necessity*.'—For necessity, read folly, extravagance, guilt,—or, perhaps, like his parents"—Here a tide of recollections flowed on Sir Hugh's remembrance, which gradually subdued the effervescence of passion, and, throwing himself into a seat, and covering his face, he sunk into a mournful reverie. Mrs Eleanor forbore to interrupt its course, until

Sir Hugh, heaving a deep sigh, handed her the letter, desiring her to peruse the contents. She complied, and returned it, saying,—

“ My dear friend, we are not always to judge from appearances ; there may be reasons, and honourable ones, for what your nephew demands. Do not act rashly. Consider to what a state you will reduce him, should you refuse to comply with his wishes. Figure to yourself Mr Tyrconnell, perhaps imprisoned in a foreign land, without friends, or, it may be, without the absolute necessities of life.”

“ My poor erring Edmund ! thy son shall not be reduced to such a situation,” cried the Baronet, with emotion. “ Great were thy faults, but great was also thy repentance. Elvira’s child too !” It was the first time Mrs Eleanor had heard him pronounce that name, and she hailed it as a happy omen.

“ I shall retire, my dear friend,” she said, kindly taking his hand, “ and return when you are more composed.”

“ No ! stay, pray stay, Mrs Eleanor ; my

resolve is fixed. I will send him the sum he requires. Yet, let him not imagine," continued Sir Hugh, (anger again kindling in his countenance,) "let him not imagine, I say, that I will be a pander to his future vices, to supply him with money to commit them with impunity. No! I shall take care to tell him, that, although he must ultimately enjoy my title, a shilling of my property need not descend to him without my pleasure. When this poor carcass," he added, contemptuously regarding his person, "is consigned to its mother earth, the spirit which animates my wretched frame shall not, I hope, be doomed to witness the profligate abuse of that wealth which was committed to its care during a miserable sojourn in this vale of tears; for, if in a future state we are permitted to regard what passes in this lower sphere, I trust I shall not see the paltry lucre of this world, only valuable when applied unto its proper ends, squandered away on abandoned profligacy by my heir!"

"I sincerely hope not," said Mrs Elea-

nor. " Riches are either the glorious means of promoting virtue, or the despicable medium for the encouragement of vice. But, dear Sir Hugh, let me entreat you to form no rash resolution ; time and events tell character, and you may yet have cause to rejoice in that of your nephew ; for though he may have been guilty of some of those errors which youth, by the contagious influence of example, and the headstrong nature of unbridled passion, is too often led to commit, yet he may regret the past, and we should ever remember the sublime words which say, ' There is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth.' "

" Mrs Eleanor, you are an excellent woman," said the Baronet, emphatically pressing her hand. " I shall reflect on what you have said, and my reply, I hope, will be dictated by those Christian feelings you so admirably preach and beautifully practise."

" You remember not that *humility* is amongst the catalogue, or else wish to make me forget its existence altogether," returned Mrs Eleanor, with a smile. " Farewell ! I expect

my next visit shall bring intelligence of our dear absent travellers." So saying, she took leave, and Sir Hugh retired to dispatch an epistle to Albert, in which, after some sage advice and many hints, not to depend on the reversion of the Tyrconnell estate, he judged it proper to comply with his nephew's request.

CHAPTER XIII.

It is now time to return to Mr St Albe and Isabel.

Oxenstiern says, " If the high-road to hell be sown with delights and pleasures, you must necessarily pass through England to go to it." Our heroine, though not quite so enthusiastic in her encomiums, yet experienced considerable gratification in her journey through that country, many parts of which rather resembled a highly cultivated domain, than a public road for travellers. Late on the fifth day they approached " the stir of the great Babel"—London. Isabel looked out of one window, then out of the other, her father sportively reminding her, that she need not betray the inquisitorial disposition of her sex,

as she would soon have sufficient leisure to contemplate all the *lions*. Isabel heeded him not, but continued to ask a thousand questions, without ever waiting to receive a single answer.

At length, Mr St Albe exclaimed, " Well, my love, I shall now be released from your categorical inquiries ; for we are entering Portman Square, and this is Lord Belville's," he added, as the carriage stopped at a magnificent mansion.

" I suppose my aunt has already dined ; for it is nearly six o'clock," said Isabel.

St Albe smiled as he replied, " No, my dear, that is not very probable. Country hours are the very antipodes to those of London ;—it is possible that the family may not yet have retired to dress for dinner."

The loud knock of Mr St Albe's servant prevented Isabel's reply. The door was immediately opened by a domestic in splendid livery, and three or four other servants appeared lounging about the spacious hall.

“ Is Lady Belville at home ? ” inquired St Albe.

“ Yes, Sir ;—I believe her Ladyship has just returned from the Park,” said one of the numerous retinue. Mr St Albe smiled at such a confirmation of his previous prediction to Isabel ; while, turning round, he said,

“ Be so kind as to inform Lady Belville, that Mr and Miss St Albe have arrived.”

“ My Lady is, I believe, Sir, in the drawing-room,” rejoined the smart powdered lacquey tripping up stairs, and motioning to our travellers to follow him.

They obeyed, and were ushered through a suite of rooms, in the last of which they found Lady Belville attired in a fashionable morning dress, reclining on an Ottoman, and turning over the pages of a French novel.

As the name of St Albe was announced, she rose, and, with the polished ease of high life, advanced to receive her guests.

“ Mr St Albe, I rejoice to see you, and regret Mrs Eleanor Fitzroy does not accompany you. Isabel, (for I cannot bring myself

to say Miss St Albe,) from my heart, I give you welcome," said Lady Belville, in a voice of insinuating sweetness, as she gently drew the lovely girl towards her, and slightly touched her cheek; adding, "I hope you have not experienced any of the disagreeables usually attendant on a long journey. At all events, I trust you will forget them here. Isabel, you will create quite a sensation in the *beau monde*. Nay, do not blush, for *mauvaise honte* is quite out of date."

"I was not conscious of having been guilty of such an outrage against the laws of *bon ton*," said Isabel laughing; "but I hope, under your Ladyship's tuition, I shall soon exchange the rust of retirement for the fascinating polish of high society, which I feel at this moment so peculiarly attractive," she added, bowing to Lady Belville; but, at the same time, colouring a deeper tinge of "celestial rosy red."

"Upon my word, a very pretty compliment," returned Lady Belville, with a slight inclination of the head.

“ How, amongst the wilds of Ireland, did you become so conversant in the language of flattery ?”

“ That of truth,” said Isabel, “ ought to be universal ; in the language of insincerity I trust I shall never be an adept.”

“ Yet the latter is that which is most current in life,” said Mr St Albe.

“ *Ainsi va le monde,*” replied Lady Belville ; “ and it would, I fear, be a vain attempt to turn Legislator to the world of Fashion ; but all your primitive ideas on the subject, Isabel, will soon wear off, and bow subservient to the code of laws a London winter enacts.” Perceiving, however, that Mr St Albe did not appear pleased with her last remark, and, wishing to turn the conversation, she quickly added, “ But you have not yet seen my daughters ; and I rather think they are visible.” Then touching the bell, she demanded from the servant who answered the summons, if the Ladies Julia and Emily were at home ? and received an answer in the negative, while, at the same

moment, one of the fair objects of inquiry entered.

Lady Julia St Albe was tall and well-looking, but a certain air of extreme affectation pervaded her every movement, and obscured every natural grace. Not conceiving slipshod shoes and inky fingers the indispensable attributes of a literary character, her dress was quite *recherché*, and evidently intended to represent the classical attire of the ancients. The studied folds of her drapery—the air of her head—her eternal efforts at effect and attitude, in one glance impressed the spectator with the idea that she imagined herself, and wished to be universally esteemed, a Corinne or a Sappho. Whether she was justified in pretending to either character the reader will soon be enabled to judge.

“Julia, my dear, I have the pleasure to present Mr and Miss St Albe,” said Lady Belville.

Her daughter gave a pretty start of affected surprise, while, with a true theatrical step, she

advanced, and, extending the two first fingers of her right hand to Isabel, exclaimed,—

“ With what delectation my soul hails the commencement of an acquaintance with my lovely relative !” and, addressing Mr St Albe, she plaintively added, “ May I also hope to include you, dear Sir, within the little magic circle sacred to friendship ?”

“ Aware of the fallibility of human nature,” replied St Albe, with a smile a little sarcastic, “ I never make rash promises ; at the same time, permit me to say, I am fully sensible of the honour conferred, in the proffered admission amongst Lady Julia St Albe’s ‘ chosen few.’ ”

The slight tone of irony which tintured Mr St Albe’s manner, as he uttered these words, appeared to effect a complete revolution in her Ladyship’s favourable sentiments. A silence ensued, which Lady Belville relieved by saying, “ Julia, my love, where have you been all the morning ; and do you know any thing of your sister, Emily ?”

“ In the early part of the day I was en-

gaged in hermencutical emendations of Milton, and in philosophical elucidations of Shakespeare. Subsequently, that inestimable fluviatic treasure, Time, was devoted to attending Sir Humphry Davy's sublime lectures on chemistry. That erudite professor treated on Hydrogen, and also on its combination with simple combustibles, such as carbonated hydrogen gas, sulphuretted hydrogen gas, and proved the attraction of phosphorus, which condenses the oxygen gas from the atmosphere. To-morrow we are to have Hydrostatics and Hydraulics discussed, with various experiments *secundum artem*."

As the learned lady concluded her philosophical harangue, Isabel and her father exchanged a speaking glance as they mutually recollected their conversation respecting *Blues*.

"But you have not replied to the former part of my question," said Lady Belville, (who appeared fully sensible of the absurdity of her daughter's pedantry.) "Where is Emily?"

"I really cannot tell; her pursuits, you

are aware, are so very contrarious to mine. Probably she has passed her morning in circumforaneous visitations, or else in the Park, with a score of illiterate cosmopolites or coxcombical beaux, enjoying ‘the skyey influences ;’—*à propos*, what an interesting science is the study of Pneumatics !” added Lady Julia, turning to Mr St Albe.

“Possibly,” he dryly replied. The discussion was interrupted by the entrance of Lady Emily, a made-up, simple, missish-looking damsel, befurbelowed and beflounced in the very extreme of French fashion, with flaxen ringlets, and light-blue eyes that expressed nothing, together with an eternal simper, meant to display one dimple that unfortunately lurked in the vicinity of her coral lips.

After an introduction to our heroine and her father had been performed, Lady Emily threw herself into a *chaise longue*, and, displaying to the utmost advantage her pretty little sandalled foot, exclaimed,—

“Bless me ! I do feel so fatigued ; I have

been all over the world with Lady Dashton. To Robins's sale,—to the bazaar,—to the Park,—to the automaton chess-player,—to the British Gallery,—to Bell's in St James's Street, and half-a-dozen other *marchandes des modes*, to say nothing of cards, I verily believe, dropped at every square at the west end of town."

"Upon my word, you have been most ingenious in dispatching so much important business in so short a time; for, as well as my recollection assists me, a London morning consists of but a few hours," said Mr St Albe.

"From three till six," carelessly replied Lady Emily; "but then you know," she continued, turning to Isabel, "it is quite sufficient to be seen for a few moments at the fashionable lounges; and as to visiting, no mortal ever thinks of doing more than leaving cards."

"A pasteboard acquaintance is therefore, I suppose, chiefly cultivated in the empire of fashion," said our heroine.

"Precisely," answered Lady Belville.

“ But I must disperse this family congress, as it is quite time to dress for dinner. Emily, am I to expect any addition to our social circle ?” added her Ladyship, as she rose to retire.

“ Yes, Ma’am. Lady Dashton, Sir Felix Pettito, and Lord Langrave, said they would join us at seven o’clock.”

“ Lord Langrave !” reiterated Lady Belville, changing colour. “ I thought his Lordship left here for Scotland a week since.”

“ No, his intention has been changed, no one knows why or wherefore.”

“ *Tant mieux*,” said Lady Belville, turning to a mirror, and adjusting her ringlets. “ Mr St Albe, a valet attends your orders. Isabel, my *femme de chambre* is at your service ; shall I send her to your apartment ?”

Isabel bowed acquiescence, and Lady Belville left the room.

“ ‘ To count time by its artificial divisions is the resource of inanity,’ says a modern author ; nevertheless, yon ‘ silent finger’ warns me that *tempus fugit*,” affectedly drawled Lady

Julia, glancing at a French *pendule*, as she rose and followed the example of the rest of the party, in adjourning to perform the important duties of the toilet.

CHAPTER XIV.

ISABEL, we are compelled to acknowledge, was not so expeditious in dressing as many of her contemporary heroines, who generally accomplish that office in an incredibly short period. The trouble of unpacking trunks, deciding on attire, and other nameless *et cætera*, which do occur in real life, but which seldom inconvenience the happy heroines of romance, detained Isabel a longer time than she usually devoted to the science of adornment.

The members of the dinner party were consequently assembled before she descended to join them, and prior to Isabel's and Mr St Albe's appearance, the following conversation took place amongst the drawing-room circle, which we shall here take the liberty to relate.

“ My charming friend, ten thousand pardons ! ” exclaimed Lady Belville as she entered the saloon, where were assembled Lady Dashton, Sir Felix Pettito, and Lord Langrave. Then turning to the latter, she added,

“ What an unexpected pleasure to see your Lordship here ! I thought by this time you were half way to the Hebrides ! ” Langrave bowed as he gracefully replied,

“ I found it quite impossible to deprive myself of your all-attractive society, and have therefore for the present abandoned the idea of leaving town. ”

“ Really ! I am most happy we are not to be deprived of such a valuable acquisition ; but, my dear Lady Dashton, let me again apologize for apparent impoliteness ; the arrival of Mr St Albe and his daughter must, however, plead my excuse. You can fancy all the civil things, and *mille petit riens*, with which, as mistress of the revels, I was compelled to greet my guests. ”

“ Oh, undoubtedly ! but are they absolutely come ? ” returned Lady Dashton. “ Well, and what sort of person is Miss St Albe ? ”

A Glorvina, I suppose, or else a little timid shrinking creature, who, as a celebrated modern poet says,

‘ Smells of bread and butter.’ ”

“ *Ni l’un ni l’autre.* Miss St Albe is certainly what the men call handsome, though not the style of beauty I admire ; and as to manners, considering her Irish education, it is astonishing how very little of *the native* appears.”

“ How am I to understand that *equivoque* ? ” demanded Langrave. “ Does your Ladyship mean to insinuate, that art, rather than nature, preponderates in the composition of Miss St Albe ? ”

“ Lord Langrave is possessed of too much penetration to require my assistance to develope character,” rejoined Lady Belville, with a look which expressed a volume of meaning.

“ *Nous verrons,*” said his Lordship, smiling in return.

“ How astonished the pretty dear will be when suddenly initiated amongst *us*,” af-

fectedly lisped Sir Felix Pettito. "If she is handsome, she must certainly be an Hibernian *rara avis*. I have lately been obliged to visit my estates in that country called Ireland, and, petrify me, if I ever saw a woman worth looking at, during my stay in that land of savages. All vulgar, red and white monsters, with their 'Ah do!' and 'Sure now!' so dreadful to polite ears; and as to the men, such a set of Herculean ill-dressed beings. By Jove, there is not one amongst them knows how to tie a cravat!"

Then, as if exhausted by the effort of having uttered so many syllables, Sir Felix sunk back in his chair, and dangled his eye-glass.

"But what fortune has Miss St Albe? Does she weigh heavy?" said Lady Dashton, addressing Lord Langrave.

"Nay, you must apply to Lady Belville for information on that subject," he replied.

"I hope Miss St Albe's property does not resemble the generality of Irish portions, which are usually to be found in the future tense.—Miss Such-a-one will have '*a nate*

little bit of an estate,' is the common-place phrase in that country ; but the period of possession, I understand, never arrives," whispered Lady Dashton ; then elevating her voice to its natural tone, she added, " Pray Lady Belville, gratify those gentlemen's curiosity, and tell them, has Miss St Albe the *de quoi vivre* ?"

" Heigh-ho ! what a degenerate age we live in ! Jason's propensity is now indeed universal," said her Ladyship, evading a direct answer.

" Yes, every thing goes by specific gravity !" exclaimed Langrave, significantly.

" Specific gravity !" re-echoed Lady Julia, (who had just entered in time to overhear the words.) " Oh ! did you attend Sir Humphry's divine lecture, in which he so delightfully explained the attraction of cohesion ?"

" It is only necessary to behold Lady Julia St Albe sensibly to feel its power," rejoined Langrave, as he advanced to meet her Ladyship.

The fair spinster affected pretty confu-

sion as she replied, “ Your approbation must be always valuable to every person who is capable of appreciating critical acumen, or unrivalled *virtù*. ” In return to such a compliment, the gallant peer bowed profoundly, as he led the erudite Julia to a seat at the upper end of the room, and took his station beside her scientific Ladyship, who, attired in adhesive drapery, classically looped with cameos, and her head dressed *à l’antique*, imagined herself, at that instant, an object fit to command the adoration of every connoisseur in Christendom. Too charitable to disappoint such modest expectations, Lord Langrave had just finished a laboured tirade of adulatory bombast, when Lady Emily appeared in full Parisian costume, ornamented with even more than the necessary profusion of Blond lace and French flowers, and completely resembling a *fille d’opéra* commencing a pas seul, as she lightly tripped across the saloon exclaiming,—

“ And has not your critical Lordship one word of commendation to bestow on my attire,

which is (I appeal to Lady Dashton) quite *à la Française?*”

“ ‘Th’ adorning thee with so much art
Is but a barbarous skill ;
’Tis but the poisoning of a dart,
Too apt before to kill,”

said Langrave, inwardly rejoiced at having given *quantum sufficit* of flattery to both the fair sisters.

Lady Emily made a *reverence Parisienne* in Milaine’s best style, and at the same moment the door opened, and Mr St Albe and his lovely daughter entered ; but, as it has been the custom, time immemorial, to describe the dress and appearance of heroines, we must gratify the curiosity we hope our fair readers experience on the present occasion, and shall, in the following chapter, attempt a description of Isabel, ere she is formally introduced to the expectant circle.

CHAPTER XV.

Not yet having modernized her wardrobe, our heroine wisely chose the simplest attire it contained, conceiving the least remarkable the best. She was therefore dressed in a plain white muslin robe, a row of pearls encircled her lovely neck, and a wreath of lily of the valley bound her luxuriant nut-brown hair.

There was a native majesty in Isabel's appearance which insured respect. Dignity might be the term most justly applied, as characteristic of her faultless figure, but it was blended with such perfect feminine delicacy, that the queen was forgot in contemplating the woman. She was so dazzlingly fair, that, to use the language of the delightful Minstrel of the North,—

“ You had said her hue was pale,
But when she faced the summer gale,
Or spoke, or sung, or quicker mov’d,
Or heard the praise of those she lov’d,
Or when of interest was expressed,
Aught that wak’d feeling in her breast ;
The mantling blood, in ready play,
Rivall’d the blush of early day.”

Indeed, the vivid colour which occasionally glowed in her cheek, eloquently evinced the spotless purity, the bright intelligence, and the sensitive modesty of the mind within, while her noble countenance, illumined by the most radiant rays of intellect, spoke the greatness of her soul. There was also a *mélange* of timidity and playfulness in Isabel’s general expression, which was so perfectly bewitching, that the critic who was first attracted by the commanding proportions of her form, to judge it by the cold rules of art, forgot the trifling jargon, in contemplating the ever varying play of feature, that chiefly constituted the touching charm of a face, which inspired the emotion of permanent interest, rather than the

transport of momentary admiration. Her smile, too, was peculiarly fascinating ; but the full pointing lip and the classical contour of the profile were both eclipsed by the mild, though brilliant lustre of her dark blue eyes, through whose long silken fringes beamed a spirit sparkling, yet soft. Whether flashing with animation, or mellowed by sensibility, they were equally resistless. Strong, powerful, is the influence, the all-subduing grace of mental expression, that soul of beauty which gives more “ magic of bliss ” than the utmost regularity of feature. Isabel St Albe possessed it in an extraordinary degree ; few could behold her without feeling and acknowledging—

“ The might, the majesty of loveliness ! ”

Although our heroine had not mixed in what is called the world, yet the society in which she had moved in the neighbourhood of the parsonage, though limited, was extremely select. Besides, her father and aunt were both endowed with all the polish of innate refine-

ment, though, perhaps, not intimately acquainted with the trifling and often absurd minutiae of modern fashion; she had, therefore, none of the awkward bashfulness, which generally distinguishes an absolute recluse, though a much greater portion of that obsolete quality called modesty, than fashionable Misses now possess, or even affect. Thus, as she entered the room leaning on her father, with the most unpretending grace, though her palpitating bosom and heightened colour evinced a degree of embarrassment, yet there was nothing inelegant in her movement or address; on the contrary, the slight confusion which pervaded her manner as she acknowledged the various introductions of Lady Belville, gave but additional interest, and threw a peculiar charm over all she said and all she looked.

“Heavens, what an angel!” exclaimed Lord Langrave almost audibly, as he glanced at our blushing heroine. But too well bred to distress, even by admiration, his Lordship quickly restrained feelings, which few women would have found easy to excite, and resign-

ing his situation next Lady Julia, he advanced, and, after the customary formalities, commenced a lively and agreeable conversation with Isabel, in which she soon joined with tolerable ease, feeling thankful to his Lordship for relieving her from the embarrassment attendant on her *entrée*, which was gradually dispelled in a considerable degree, by the animation and poignancy of his remarks.

“ But Sir Felix Pettito has not yet had the honour of presentation to Miss St Albe,” said Langrave, as he finished a satirical sketch of the novelties of the metropolis; “ and I can assure you,” he added, “ the Baronet claims a distinguished place in the annals of notoriety. Nay, do not look that way, but tell me what are your notions of a Dandy, an absolute exquisite, one of those

‘ Unfinished things, one knows not what to call,
Their generation’s so equivocal.’ ”——

“ Your Lordship really gives me credit for greater ingenuity than I possess, in supposing me capable of analyzing NOTHING,” replied Isabel sportively.

“ Well, then, as a native of a *certain country* would say, allow me to present NOTHING *in propria persona*,” rejoined Lord Langrave, with a sly expression. “ Baronet,” he continued in a louder key, “ advance!—Miss St Albe, permit me to introduce one of the most accomplished men in town, the very quintessence of fashion, the mirror of politeness, Sir Felix Pettito!” The Baronet, who had hitherto only seen Isabel’s figure, as she stood with her back towards him, at such a flattering portrait, raised his eyes, (which, in crossing the room, had been rivetted in admiration on his own well-turned ankles,) and, to his infinite dismay, recognized, in the person of our heroine, one of the spectators who had witnessed the scene on board the Holyhead packet, in which he and his stays had been exposed to public ridicule, through the mischievous exploit of the malicious Fidèle. Isabel immediately recollected the hero of the corset, but good-naturedly determined not to mention the adventure, except the Dandy’s puppyism should hereafter call for coercion.

For once, in his life, Sir Felix looked confused, which Lord Langrave perceiving, said,

“ By Jove, Miss St Albe, you rival Orpheus himself, whose

‘ Lute was strung with poet’s sinews,
Whose golden touch could soften steel and stones.’

For you have effected a much more extraordinary feat, in proving Sir Felix Pettito of ‘ penetrable stuff.’ I thought, Baronet, you were cased in armour, that bade defiance to the shafts of the sly urchin Cupid ; but now that tell-tale blush betrays the contrary.”

The word *armour* acted like electricity on the unfortunate Sir Felix, who immediately concluded that Isabel had revealed the dreaded secret prior to introduction.

“ Petrify me ! if I——, if ever I——,” stammered the unhappy Dandy in the most pitiable state of agitation. “ You will not, Ma’am ; that is, I am sure that——,” getting more and more confused, Sir Felix was compelled to stop.

“ You need not fear, Baronet, *je suis tou-*

jours Fidèle," said Isabel, laying a playful emphasis on the last word.

"A secret between Miss St Albe and Sir Felix Pettito!" exclaimed Lord Langrave in the most evident surprise.

"Then I have not had the honour of performing a first introduction?" he added, turning to our heroine.

The Dandy gave a beseeching look. The announcement of dinner fortunately precluded a reply; and Sir Felix skipped off with more alacrity than he had ever before permitted his limbs to assume, to escort Lady Emily down stairs, while Isabel accepted Lord Langrave's proffered arm. His Lordship sportively endeavoured to unravel the mystery, which he declared existed between our heroine and Sir Felix; but, perceiving that she did not wish any further inquiry, with respect to her acquaintance with the sapient Baronet, Lord Langrave, with his usual good breeding, dropped the subject.

Dinner passed, as most dinners do, in heavy solemn grandeur, now and then enlivened

by interesting disquisitions on the relative merits of French and English cookery, and the necessary ingredients of the various *saucés piquantes*, for which Britain is indebted to her gay Continental neighbours, whose superior skill in the culinary art she is compelled to acknowledge.

Langrave was seated between Lady Julia and Isabel. The former appeared wrapt in philosophical reverie, which was always the case when neglected by ungrateful mankind; finding, however, that her profound meditations continued too long uninterrupted, she thus replied, in answer to a humorous account of modern improvement in the science of *savoir vivre*, which Langrave had just given our heroine,

“ But surely, my Lord, you cannot wish to condemn so classic a study as gastronomy? Homer, Aristophanes, and others among the ancients, have condescended to give hints respecting the sciential art of cookery; and Achilles, we all know, was his own *cuisinier* !”

“ I never dispute the chasteness of your

Ladyship's taste," returned Langrave ironically ; " but should you wish for further edification on that interesting topic, permit me to recommend the perusal of ' L'Almanach des Gourmands ;' it is really a very entertaining production."

" Apicius, who (to use the phraseology of Lady Morgan) is the Hierophant of gastronomy, I have read ; and, as I invariably prefer ancient to modern authors, nothing but your wishes could induce me to study the latter," Lady Julia replied, with a tone and a look sufficiently indicative of happy submission.

Lord Langrave bowed, and, turning to Isabel, said in a low voice,

" Do you not admire her Ladyship's predilection for any work consecrated by the hallowed influence of time ? Blue stockings are generally destined to ' single blessedness ;' and should the fair Julia ever arrive at a certain age, without having obtained the *desideratum* of matrimony, and succeed in establishing her *penchant* for antiquity, she will have

a chance of becoming an object of admiration to every virtuoso of the age,—

“ A consummation devoutly to be wished.”

“ Your Lordship seems inclined to be satirical,” said Isabel gravely ; “ and permit me to add, that, if disposed to exercise your wit, a subject, different from that you have chosen, might have been selected with better taste for the ear of Lady Julia St Albe’s relative. However,” she continued in a livelier tone, “ somebody says, no matter where, that the shafts of malignity recoil with added venom on the hand from whence they flew. Does your Lordship feel the darts ?” she blushing-ly demanded.

“ Not those you have so severely imputed to me, but others of a more dangerous nature I do feel must be the lot of all who encounter the smiles of Miss St Albe, or even her reproof,” said Lord Langrave reproachfully ; “ but I know I was wrong ; pray, pray forgive me.”

Lady Belville's rising from table precluded any reply save a bow of acquiescence.

Previous to the ladies leaving the room, it was proposed that the whole party should adjourn in a short time to Drury Lane Theatre ; an arrangement which was subsequently put into execution.

Leaving, therefore, our heroine to enjoy the pleasures of dramatic representation, we shall return to other members of our history, in whom we hope our readers take a slight degree of interest.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN the course of a few days subsequent to the receipt of his nephew's letter, Sir Hugh Tyrconnell was surprised by the arrival of another epistle, also bearing a foreign post-mark, but directed in an unknown hand.

With an indefinable curiosity he opened it and perused its contents, which were as follows :—

“ SIR,

“ Although a stranger, I shall not apologize for the liberty I take in addressing you, —for the domestic anecdotes which the subject of my present letter compels me to relate, —nor yet for the egotism such a detail will necessarily involve.

“ The approach of death levels with mighty power the artificial distinctions of society. When on the brink of eternity the dazzling illusions of this world vanish ! As at the touch of some potent enchanter the spell is dissolved.

“ I feel what I assert at this awful moment. The hand which now addresses Sir Hugh Tyrconnell will soon be reduced to dust ; but, while strength is left to wield the pen, I conceive myself called upon, by justice and gratitude, to depict (though in feeble colours) the disinterested conduct of your pre-eminently noble generous nephew, Albert Tyrconnell, whose virtues, far beyond my powers of description, will be better delineated by a plain statement of facts than by the most elaborate narration. My beloved husband (Captain Monteith) was an officer in your late brother's regiment. He witnessed the death of the gallant Major Tyrconnell. From his arms the spirit of that hero winged its flight to another and a better sphere. Monteith grieved with the truest sincerity. For many

years he was subject to fits of the deepest despondency, occasioned by the affliction his mind had suffered, when bereft of a friend to whom he was attached by the strongest ties which unite man to man ; and his health declined so much from mental uneasiness, that he at length quitted the army, and, hoping to restore convalescence, retired to try the influence of domestic life in the bosom of his social circle.

“ My father was the clergyman of the little country village, over which the proud towers of Monteith Abbey rose as if in conscious majesty.

“ I was his only child and sole comfort, my mother having been dead for several years ; and from infancy I had been accustomed to associate with the members of the Monteith family. Never shall I forget the day when the heir of all its honours arrived at the seat of his ancestors ! But the limits of a letter will not allow me to be diffuse ; suffice it then to say, that imperceptibly an attachment was contracted between Captain Monteith and

myself. Repeatedly he urged me to a private marriage ; being well aware that his father would never consent to any union, without the accompaniments of rank and fortune. As frequently I refused to enter his family without the sanction of a parent's blessing. But my beloved father, who had long been in a declining state of health, died !

“ I was left alone in the world, destitute of friends, at the early age of sixteen ! Monteith was four and thirty, and so great a disparity in our mutual years, probably blinded his family to the progress of our love ; for, on my parent's demise, Mrs Monteith (unsuspicious of her son's predilection) invited me to the Abbey. Inclination, indeed, I may say necessity, compelled me to accept the proffered asylum. Our attachment remained undiscovered, gaining daily strength by constant association. At the end of twelve months, Monteith's arguments prevailed. I became his wife, and he immediately absconded from the Abbey, leaving behind a letter explanatory of our abrupt departure. Would that my little

history could prove a warning beacon, to deter young persons from entering the holy pale of marriage without parental consent ! With the sophistry most people use in similar circumstances, Monteith persuaded himself, that his father would ultimately relent, and receive us as his children.

“ Alas ! that period never arrived. For twelve years, we struggled with the keenest adversity, pecuniary and mental. Three lovely babes were successively torn from us by the cruel hand of death. Yet vain were our repeated applications to Monteith’s relatives. Steeled in the invincible armour of haughty pride and vindictive resentment, not even an answer was vouchsafed to our reiterated supplications. At length we retired to the neighbourhood of Geneva, where I had the agony of beholding my adored Monteith, nursing in solitude the grief and melancholy to which he became hourly more and more the prey. In my presence, he endeavoured to appear cheerful, and resigned to the many deprivations we were obliged to endure ; but the effort cost him

much, and I had the horror of seeing his health (always delicate) rapidly decline. The flushed cheek, the quickened pulse, the wasted limb, too surely announced the fatal approach of consumption !

“ Now is the period of my dismal tale, in which, Sir, your noble nephew played so distinguished a part. Mr Tyrconnell was visiting the scenery of Switzerland. Chance led to an introduction between him and my husband, when the latter discovered in your ward the son of his lamented Major Tyrconnell.

“ Many had been the inquiries made by Captain Monteith respecting the youthful Albert, previous to our departure from England ; but satisfied at having heard he was under your guardianship, he was necessitated, by the pressure of accumulated misfortunes, to forego the hope he had often indulged of sometimes seeing the child of his earliest friend. Great, therefore, was his delight at a recognition, which permitted him to cultivate an intimacy, that reminded him of happier days, which lightened the tedium of indisposition, and di-

verted his mind from dwelling on painful and useless regrets.

“ For three months, the generous Albert devoted himself, with the utmost assiduity, to the task of attending the couch of my suffering husband. By night and by day, his efforts, his cares were unremitting, while his slender purse was ever at our command. The intellectual stores of his highly cultivated mind were constantly exerted to banish *ennui*, as with the smile of benevolence he humoured the querulous wishes of the invalid, and endeavoured to amuse the languor of indisposition, by the recital of ‘ battles lost or won.’ At other times, Albert, in the language of inspiration, would discourse with my Monteith on the sublime truths of revealed religion, pointing his hopes to that haven, where ‘ the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.’ Our little cottage was on the border of the Lake of Geneva, and imagination could scarcely fancy a more striking picture than Albert Tyrconnell, in the prime of manhood, seated beside the great chair in which my dearest

husband was often wheeled out to enjoy the fragrance of the evening air, the sacred volume before him, reading its divine promises to the poor invalid, and, in energetic language, painting the happiness, the never-dying enjoyments of eternity.

“What a contrast was the countenance of the youthful warrior, glowing with health and beauty, his whole figure breathing enthusiasm, to the attenuated form of Monteith! The care-worn hollow cheek, the ghastly smile, the sunken eye which yet gazed on Albert, and gleamed the transport of belief, in promises held forth for the encouragement of the pious Christian. But, Oh! far dearer to me was that slender fragile figure sickness had transformed, and sorrow altered, than even in the blooming days of health, when she laughed in the eye, and illumed the cheek with her brightest hues; for was not my beloved consecrated to my feelings, by the sufferings which affection had occasioned? The soul was still the same, though the earthly tabernacle was fast decaying, and

spirit victoriously asserted its triumph over the material of existence !

“ On the close of one memorable evening we were, as usual, assembled beneath the shade of a favourite tree ; the sun was setting in effulgent majesty, flinging his rich rays of golden light over the sublime scenery of Geneva, as Albert closed the Bible ; and Monteith, pointing to the departing luminary, exclaimed in broken sentences,—

“ ‘ Such is the end of the righteous !—The glories of revelation beam round his dying couch, and half divest the mighty tyrant of his terrors ! Like that splendid orb, the Christian man shall surely rise again ; but, exalted above the horizon of hopes and fears, his brilliant course shall never end ; infinite beatitude, perennial bliss, a glory that ‘ fadeth not away,’ shall be his portion, eternal in the Heavens !’

“ Monteith’s voice faltered ;—overcome by emotion and exhaustion, he paused ;—sunk in his chair ;—extended one hand to Tyrconnell, the other to myself ;—with dying

effort strongly pressed them both ;—raised his eyes to heaven—and expired !

“ I shall draw a veil over what followed.—There are feelings too sacred—sufferings too acute to describe. Such were mine. For several days I remained in a sort of stupor, nearly resembling death ; and even when returning recollection awoke me to a view of all the horrors of my situation, I had not energy to act, and scarcely dared to think. At length, I asked to see Mr Tyrconnell ; judge, Sir, of my agony, when informed that an execution having been laid on all my little property, your nephew had made himself responsible for debts, amounting to five thousand pounds ; and that, not being able to give immediate payment, the creditors had cast him into prison, until the required sum should come from England.

“ Such an unexpected tale aroused my slumbering faculties. In the greatest agitation of mind, I scrawled a few incoherent lines to Mr Tyrconnell. He tells me, he has written to you for the sum entrusted to

your guardianship ; but would not confess, whether or not he had revealed the cause of that demand. With vehemence he implored, he besought me, not to address you. But could I remain silent ? No ! every sentiment of honour and of gratitude compelled me to my present disclosure.

“ Misfortune has long been effecting direful inroads on my broken constitution. I am fast approaching ‘ that bourne, from whence no traveller returns.’ I feel I shall soon be reunited to my adored husband ; but my spirit is lightened, by having, ere its departure, done justice (though feebly) to the most exalted of mankind.

“ I have scarcely strength to conclude,

“ And subscribe myself,

“ ROSE MONTEITH.”

CHAPTER XVII.

“ALBERT! dear generous Albert!” exclaimed Sir Hugh, as he concluded the affecting narration of Rose’s misfortunes. “Nobly hast thou redeemed thy parent’s errors! Oh, virtue! how glorious are thy results!—how splendid thy triumphs!—I thought,” he continued, as he raised his eyes suffused in tears of pious gratitude to heaven,—“I thought this wretched heart of mine was callous to the kind emotions of our nature, that seared, blighted by misfortune, the capability of feeling was denied me!—But, blessed be God, I yet can feel. Yes, deeply, keenly!—Often have the tears of sorrow bedewed these furrowed cheeks. But, Oh! how long since drops of joy, sent warm from the heart, and sancti-

fied by its best sentiments, have fallen from my eyes !” Sir Hugh paused.

The recollection of past times generally repelled sensibility and extinguished tenderness, and when once he indulged in painful retrospection, the natural beauty of his character became darkened by the influence of prejudice ; and the sudden revulsion of his feelings rendered him but more obstinate in erroneous opinion and consequent perversion.

The glow of enthusiasm gradually faded. Its brilliant light ceased to irradiate his expressive countenance, which was soon obscured by the gloomy shades of doubt and of misanthropy. The Baronet paced his study with quickened step ;—suddenly he stopped, and, as he struck his forehead, vehemently exclaimed, “ But who has told this tale ? A woman !

“ That sex was first in mockery of us made.”

Fool that I was, to credit aught from *her* pen !—Thank Heaven, there has been no witness to my egregious credulity !—Believe a

woman! I would as soon trust the wily serpent, the devouring crocodile, or treacherous basilisk, as woman!—A chameleon which changes colour in every light—a weathercock placed on a pivot freshly oiled, on a windy day—A fleecy cloud that, floating on the deep blue sky, assumes each passing moment some new shape, are models of steadiness and constancy when compared with woman!—

“Destructive, damnable, deceitful woman.”

Exhausted by passion, Sir Hugh for a moment paused—Then in an altered voice he whispered to himself, as if ashamed of the confession,—

“And yet, it grieves me to resign the bright illusion which for an instant cheated me into a hope that honour, generosity, and moral excellence, were not merely names, high-sounding titles invented by mankind to clothe their vices—to conceal deformity beneath the garb of Virtue!—

“I wish I could believe this Rose!—Oh that I dared trust a woman without proving

myself her dupe ! Why then ?—But, no !— I never yet knew one of that false sex ingenuous and true but Izzy St Albe !—And she, poor thing, will soon be spoiled, now they have got her to London !—Let me see—Ah ! I think I discover the whole plot !

“ This widow means to entrap my nephew into marriage, just as, notwithstanding all her sophistry, I perceive she did ensnare that simpleton Monteith !—She is young too ;—wedded at seventeen, and twelve years a wife.—Why, that but makes her nine-and-twenty, the very age when a manœuvring woman can best catch a fool and lead him blindfold !—Aye, aye !—She wishes first to excite my sympathy by the recital of her sentimental history, hoping that my purse will open to relieve her and Albert’s distress ; for I warrant she does not like to live on love alone. Cupid’s a bad turnspit, and that she knows from experience.”

Again Sir Hugh paused as he glanced over the letter, and again his better feelings preponderated, as he involuntarily cried,

—“ There positively is an air of truth runs through the whole production. If my nephew has really been disinterested in his conduct, he must be the finest fellow under Heaven! —What if I wrong them both?—But no!—I’m sure I’m right.

“ The woman may be just as good as the generality of her miserable gender; she may even love Albert, (at least in the interested sense in which the world translates that word;) for they say Tyrconnell is handsome, and he is what is called a Hero!

“ I once thought of uniting him with — But it is past—disappointed in that as in every thing else—Well! well!—I may as well consent now as a short time hence, when, after wearing about ‘ the mockery of woe’ for one husband, she will e’en try to get another, and will send me, forsooth, a tender confession of her grateful affection for Albert. But I will write to him; not to woman! Oh memory!—Thou remindest me, with cruel reminiscence, of the last line I e’er addressed to one of the perfidious sex—It was when——. But I will

not, dare not, trust the recollections of my foolish heart, which lingers fondly, even in old age, on her who betrayed—who spurned it!” And, wishing to fly from “the dire demon, Thought,” Sir Hugh snatched a pen, and, never giving himself time to reflect on the injustice and absurdity of the conclusions he had drawn from the perusal of Mrs Monteith’s letter, he hastily scrawled the following epistle to Albert Tyrconnell:—

“DEAR NEPHEW,

“I wronged you in supposing that dissipated extravagance was the cause of your demand for the five thousand pounds. I feel I did you injustice in that supposition, and therefore ask your pardon.

“But ‘Old birds are not to be caught with chaff!’—I have known too much of this wicked world of ours to be easily duped; and, therefore, plainly see through the machinations of this Mrs Monteith, from whom I have just received a most sententious epistle, in which she speaks of you as if your apotheo-

sis had already taken place. Oh the hypocrisy of woman!—She appears to lament the unfortunate Monteith in one sentence, and in the very next her love for you is unequivocally manifested! I suppose, like all the fools in the world, you imagine the passion reciprocal, and therefore intend to lead the fair widow to Hymen's Altar as soon as decency will permit.—Well, so be it! There is no more use in attempting to reason with man, when once he is under woman's infatuating Circean power, than there would have been in trying to persuade Mr Adam that Madam Eve was not a blessing, till she proved herself a curse by getting him turned out of Paradise, and entailing misery on the human race for ever and for ever! Pause one instant, nephew, and reflect—

‘What mighty ills have not been done by Woman.
Who was't betrayed the Capitol?—a Woman.
Who lost Mark Antony the world?—a Woman.
Who was the cause of a long ten years' war,
And laid at last old Troy in ashes?—Woman!’

Yet, was the world to last to all eternity, man

would be her slave. Love, indeed, is a sort of epidemical distemper which, like the measles, hooping-cough, or small-pox, a man must have once in the course of life. Nephew, I perceive you are inoculated, and I may therefore spare my time, pen, ink, and paper, and plainly tell you in sincerity that, since you are resolved to wed this Rose, I write to say, that I will settle on you, Sir, eight hundred pounds *per annum* ; but I wish it to be clearly understood, that that allowance is all you or your gentle spouse need ever expect from me. My title must be yours—but my fortune I can dispose of as I please ; and I rather think it shall be given in a way that people little now imagine. I shall expect to hear from you before the fatal deeds are executed ; but do not thank me—I always suspect persons who talk of gratitude.

“ Yours, Dear Nephew,

“ HUGH TYRCONNELL.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN the course of a few days after Isabel's arrival in London, Lady Belville addressed the following epistle to her Lord :

The Countess to the Earl of Belville.

“ MY DEAR LORD,

“ Chrysippus, who believed in the immortality of beasts, said, that a soul was given to a hog, in lieu of salt, to preserve the living animal from putridity. Now, I really do not wish to compare your Lordship to one of the swine species, yet, on the perusal of your last letter, it irresistibly struck my fancy, that Heaven, in making me your help-mate, designed me as a vigorous preservative against

mental stagnation. Seriously, your disinclination to co-operate in my Machiavelian policy does surprise me not a little. Awake thee, Belville, from the hypochondriac influence of a distempered imagination, which clouds thy future prospects with its visionary gloom! Foresight alone is requisite,—what is now somewhat precarious, may soon be rendered certain; for surely, my Lord, you must be aware that precaution is most necessary, to prevent the possibility of our secret being discovered. But admitting such a disclosure did take place, what more effectual means to preclude its evil consequences, than the union of Isabel with our son Allanby? For, after that event, should unforeseen incidents reveal the business, it then would be the interest of St Albe, as much as ours, to prevent publicity or *brouillerie*. I confess, however, that an obstacle to the fulfilment of my plans has arisen where least expected. That tormenting Langrave plays as usual a *contre-tems*. Every thing was arranged for his departure for Scotland, where, he said, he intended to remain six months,

and I (concluding myself safe in his absence) invited Isabel St Albe, with her tiresome father and aunt, to spend the fashionable winter with me in town ; when, lo ! that mischievous devil, Langrave, I verily believe, on purpose to annoy me, made his appearance at dinner on the very day of Isabel's arrival, and has ever since continued to play the part of her *cavalier servente*. What an unfortunate circumstance that he, above all people under Heaven, should be *au fait* to what we most desire to conceal !

“Provoking destiny ! we are placed so completely in his power, that I scarcely dare to counteract the movements of the enemy ; all my manœuvres, therefore, must be *ruses de guerre*. Yet, if I could by indirect inuendoes succeed in impressing on Isabel's mind the conviction of Lord Langrave's profligacy, I should have nothing then to dread ; her pretty morality would quickly do the rest. But there is so much candour about my prudish niece, she is so ‘inveterate in virtue,’ that I even fear to drop a hint, as I am sure the transparency of

Isabel's character is such, that her subsequent manners would inevitably betray to his Lordship's penetrating eyes, that something had been done to prejudice her against him, and I should immediately be considered the informer; consequently, it is necessary to proceed with the utmost caution. Indeed, so well I understand Lord Langrave, that, (if he really wishes to marry Isabel,) I am certain nothing could prevent his revealing the whole transaction, to which unfortunately he is privy, but the invincible awe, it is easy to perceive, the rigidity of Mr St Albe's principles inspires.

“Langrave also feels, that were he to discover his long knowledge of that affair, we should, in revenge, disclose the sums of money with which you have, from time to time, supplied the wretch, hoping thereby to bribe him into secrecy. 'Tis true we cannot produce legal acknowledgments for those sums, yet our assertions would, at least, create a strong suspicion of his Lordship's guilt, and that alone would be sufficient to make little *Miss Propriety* and her Puritanical father

reject his suit with contempt and abhorrence ; but, notwithstanding all presumptive evidence, I cannot bring myself to think that such a *Don Giovanni* has any serious idea of encountering the bondage of matrimony. No, no ! I am convinced Langrave only means, like half the men in the world, to trifle and coquet as long as inclination prompts, then bow and depart. If I imagined any thing could *bona fide* tempt him to play the Benedict, I should not, in that case, scruple to make a Smithfield bargain with the fascinating devil, and, banishing all *stimuli conscientiæ*, I should certainly agree to use my influence with the deluded girl, and her prosing Methodistical father, to prevail on them to listen to his suit, provided he would promise, in my presence, to destroy the only legal proof that could substantiate the truth of affirmations, which, if destitute of ‘confirmation strong,’ could never gain belief. But a journey to the Scilly Isles (where surely the temple of Hymen ought to be situated) is one to which, I fancy, Langrave does not feel disposed,—

‘ L’uomo è l’inconstanza stessa.’

I must, therefore, let events take their course; an active part, for the present, is denied me.

“Some moralist or other says, ‘*L’hypocrisie est un hommage que le vice rend à la vertu.*’—Rarely has the truth of that aphorism been more exemplified than in the conduct of your *cara sposa*. If you could but see with what patience and deference I listen to St Albe’s ethical sentences, and with what plausibility I now and then venture an edifying remark, you would really be quite astonished. I hope soon to get rid of the old quiz altogether, and I shall then be better able to commence my attack on his fair daughter, *selon les circonstances*.

“Isabel is beautiful, more perfectly lovely than I would for empires allow to any of your noble sex, except your Lordship. She possesses genius, extraordinary genius, highly cultivated too. But a woman of talent is, I flatter myself, no match (as the slang term goes) for a woman of the world, and I think I shall

eventually outgeneral her unsuspecting innocence. Miss St Albe will enjoy her mother's fortune, together with her father's and Mrs Eleanor Fitzroy's property, all of which will, at least, amount to L. 20,000. Money, I grant, is not to us a primary object ; still 'tis no bad ingredient in a matrimonial speculation, though vastly inferior to those other forcible incentives, which urge me, with all the powers of my soul, to wish the union that I have proposed. Oh ! could I but 'out-Herod Herod'—in other words, counterplot the schemes of our great arch-familiar, and see Isabel St Albe married to my son, Lord Alanby, with what exultation I should sing the glorious '*Io triumphe !*'

“ Julia continues to play the *innamorata* with Langrave *à merveille*, although I told the foolish girl that he almost refused her hand, when it was delicately offered to his acceptance, with the *douceur* of thirty thousand pounds, (which proceeding, by the way, the learned Julia says, was perfectly classical, as Agamemnon proposed his daughter as wife

to Achilles.) But seriously, could I have bribed his Lordship to become one of our immediate family, I should infinitely have preferred such a mode to ensure secresy, rather than the method I am now, as a *dernier resort*, obliged to adopt. How very strange, that nothing will persuade Julia that he can remain insensible to her host of charms, personal and mental. To what length vanity does carry my unhappy sex ! Thank Heaven, I am not a Blue Stocking. No, my Lord, you are married to a woman who has studied life's variegated page more than any other, and the world's volume is an endless folio. I wish you and Allanby would contemplate it a little more. *A propos*, how does our worthy son go on ? Has his native stupidity worn off by collision with the *bel-esprits* of France ?

“ ‘ *Pourvu qu'il soit méchant, il sera toujours bien,* ’—any thing is preferable to dullness. Yet, heavy as he is, Allanby, to my aspiring ambitious soul, is precious ! For, will he not transmit our title and our honours to posterity as well, as brilliant as if a youth-

ful Alcibiades? His fool's cap will be graced by an Earl's coronet, and what more need we desire?

“ I have not talked to St Albe of the expedition to the Continent. ’Twas hinted in my letter to Isabel, and that for the present is sufficient. I am quite of the opinion of a celebrated person, who said, ‘ The use of language is to conceal our thoughts.’ Adieu! Write soon. *N’ayez pas peur, et fiez vous à moi,*

“ HENRIETTA BELVILLE.

“ P. S.—I forgot to say, that my good genius induced Mrs Eleanor Fitzroy to decline my invitation.”

CHAPTER XIX.

AFTER having dispatched the above epistle, Lady Belville descended to the drawing-room, where she found our heroine, and the ladies Julia and Emily. Isabel was seated at the harp, having just finished the performance of a piece on that instrument, and Lady Emily in the act of saying,

“That air is vastly pretty. I wish you would allow me to give it to the orchestra at Almack’s; it would make such a charming quadrille.”

“I should have infinite pleasure in obliging you,” replied Isabel; “but, in the present instance, I regret it is not in my power to do so; for I should consider it a species of sacrilege, to metamorphose an original and beau-

tiful air into a measure for ‘ the light fantastic toe.’ ”

“ Miss St Albe is perfectly right,” rejoined Lady Julia. “ I dislike prodigiously the style of dancing in the present day, although I do occasionally condescend to join the votaries of Terpsichore. I wish the Greek dances were in vogue, instead of those anti-classical French quadrilles. We should then enjoy the sublime charms of poetic inspiration, united to the adaptation of harmonious motion. But I am surprised, Miss St Albe, that you so particularly admire the piece you have just concluded, for it appears to me wholly devoid of chromatic beauty.”

“ It is one of my own country’s airs,” said Isabel smiling ; “ and although perhaps destitute of the charms of high embellishment, yet I question whether all the laboured intricacies of science can afford as much genuine pleasure as a simple melody, whose every note awakens feeling, and speaks to the heart, rather than to the ear. Amongst the characteristics of Irish music, the quick transition,

from a tone of exquisite melancholy to that of inspiring gaiety, is peculiarly remarkable.”

“ Isabel, you appear so much alive to the power of harmony, that you must express well what you so eloquently describe. Pray, gratify me, by playing some of your favourites. Do you sing? I confess, I am more partial to vocal than to instrumental music,” said Lady Belville.

“ I have some natural voice, but to your fastidious ear, my untutored ‘ wood-notes wild’ would, I fear, be insupportable ; for although dear aunt Eleanor is perfectly *au fait* in the science of music, yet, feeling herself totally ignorant of the fashionable style of singing, she never undertook instruction in that department. I mean to avail myself of my present residence in London, in taking lessons from the inimitable Braham. Until I have received them, I think it prudent to avoid exhibition.”

“ By no means,” said Lady Belville ; “ if Lord Langrave was here, or any other fashionably insincere creature, I should not

think of asking you to perform ; but from my criticism you have surely nothing to fear."

Without waiting for further solicitation, Isabel acceded to the implied request, and sung, with exquisite pathos and expression, the beautiful air of Gramachree, to which the Irish Anacreon, with his usual talent, has adapted words so peculiarly appropriate.

" *Il cantar che nell' anima si sente !*" exclaimed Lord Langrave, suddenly appearing from behind a screen, as Isabel concluded. " Oh ! Miss St Albe, pray pardon my having concealed myself, to enjoy the delight, the charm of listening to your dulcet notes, which breathe more than mortal harmony."

" Your Lordship's eulogium is so very exalted, that there is no danger of my considering such a panegyric in any other light than as a mere *façon de parler*," said Isabel, slightly colouring, and rising from the harp.

" Miss St Albe, you are perfectly right in being a little incredulous ; ' the gallant gay Lotharios' of the present day are not always to be trusted," said Lady Belville, who, ex-

cessively annoyed at Lord Langrave's visit, could scarcely conceal her vexation, as she added, " But really, my love, after you have had some instructions from a London master, you will probably sing well, for your natural voice is tolerably good."

" Good !" exclaimed Lord Langrave ; " it is enchanting, heavenly ! Oh, how superior in its untutored sweetness to practised cadences, to laboured efforts, to foreign embellishments, generally ill executed, without a spark of feeling, and accompanied by the distorted grimace of the absurdest affectation."

As if willing to illustrate the remark, Lady Julia rose, and walked towards the instrument, at the same time saying, with a sigh, and a half smile, " Lord Langrave was not always so averse to the divine power of Italian music, which alone breathes soul, and inspires passion !"

" Pardon me, I am fully alive to the witchery and science of foreign composition, particularly that of *bella Italia*. Perhaps, Lady Julia, you will be so kind as to gratify such a

predilection," said his Lordship, who, feeling conscious that the unexpected pleasure of hearing Isabel had induced him to betray more enthusiasm than was quite consistent with politeness, wished to make speedy atonement for previous error.

The delighted Julia instantly acceded to his request, and seating herself at the harp, with the air of a Sappho, she began, " Ah, perdona al primo affetto,"—her eyes melting in languor, as they furtively glanced at the insensible Langrave. The pencilled passages, which the scientific hand of the master had marked, were executed with studied skill. The piano and the forte were duly observed. The air was certainly sung *con amore*, but with such affected expression and bad taste, as rendered the performance rather burlesque than interesting.

" Bravo! bravo!" exclaimed Lord Langrave, at the conclusion, who was particularly partial to that economical word, which saved so much breath and trouble whenever he felt himself obliged to compliment.

A knock at the hall door, even louder than the usual official summons of the London footmen, electrified the party yet more than his Lordship's encomiums. Langrave advanced to the window, and seeing the gaudy equipage, and the four brass-bedizened steeds of the Fogarty family, he gaily cried, " Oh, Lady Belville, I vow it is the Fogartys, or rather the Fogàrtys of Castle Fogàrty, as they now choose to designate themselves ;—Pray, pray, admit the curiosities. Come, I have not forgotten your Ladyship's speech about the gay Lothario, but I shall pardon all, if you will but allow those charming originals, *les petites entrées* for this once."

" Since you evince so much anxiety on the subject, I shall be at home," said Lady Belville, willing to make her peace on such easy terms. " Admit Mrs Fogarty," she added, turning to a servant who entered.

" I must give Miss St Albe a rapid sketch of the delectables ere they appear," said Lord Langrave. " Mrs Fogarty is a genuine vulgar Irishwoman, who having for five years mixed

in the polished society of Temple-Bar, and for a twelvemonth in that of St James's, conceives it the most atrocious crime to belong to the sister kingdom, and wishing at all risks to deny her country, she has even changed the pronunciation of her name, in order to appear Englified; but, the vernacular tongue will perseveringly break out, united to the very worst species of Cockney dialect. Mrs Fogarty got into fashion, owing to the death of a miser, who left her such an immense fortune as enables her to give the most expensive entertainments in town, which proves the potent effect of the universal magnet, and that

‘ Well dressed, well equipaged, is ticket good enough,
‘ To pass us readily through every door ! ’ ”

“ It must, however, be confessed,” said Lady Belville, “ that we people of ton only attend the wealthy Hibernian’s galas, to laugh at and ridicule the hostess, and then her daughters ! ”

The entrance of the party precluded further information.

“ Oh ! my dear Lady Belville, how kind it was in your Ladyship to admit me, Haraminta, and Hedwina this morning, as one may say, quite in a friendly way like !” exclaimed Mrs Fogarty, as she flounced into the drawing-room, followed by her promising offspring.

“ It must always afford me peculiar pleasure to see the members of the Fogarty family,” replied Lady Belville, smiling in gracious condescension.

Unable to return any suitable compliment, poor Mrs Fogarty wriggled with delight, as she turned into a deeper shade of ruby, distorted into a thousand attitudes her little short Dutch-built figure laden with finery, and nodded her waving plumes into Lady Belville’s face.

“ Is Mrs Fogarty so cruel as not to include me amongst her acquaintance ?” said Lord Langrave, advancing from the recess of the window, which had hitherto concealed his figure.

“ Not know you ! Ah, then, to be sure I do ! But my daughters, I b’lieve, my daugh-

ters have not that honour. Haraminta, my dear! — Hedwina, my love! Lord Langrave wishes to be introduced to ye.”

The two tall, raw-boned, awkward-looking damsels immediately advanced, and made obeisance to the earth, Mrs Fogarty twitching the sleeve of the eldest, and whispering in a perfectly audible tone,—

“ Lower, Haraminta, curtsey lower, I say! — Hedwina, my dear, mind your arms!”

Notwithstanding such maternal advice, Lord Langrave preserved the most ludicrous gravity, as he profoundly bowed to each of the sisters, with an air of the deepest humility.

Lady Emily tittered outright; but Lady Belville rebuking, by a glance, her daughter’s ill-breeding, turned towards her still curtseying guests, and said,—

“ Mrs Fogarty, permit me to present Miss St Albe, who is just arrived from Ireland, and will therefore be able to answer any inquiries your national feelings may suggest.”

“ Ireland! Ah really now, I know no-

thing of that country, for though I can't but say I was born there, I assure your Ladyship, I got my education in England," exclaimed the Hibernian matron, with a dignified toss of the head.

"Mrs Fogarty is a distinguished honour to whatever country she belongs," cried Lord Langrave, in a tone of insinuating politeness.

"Ah! now, really now! I'm vastly obliged to your Lordship.—But sure, your Ladyship wouldn't employ an Irish governess!" Mrs Fogarty added, in a half whisper to Lady Belville, for having indistinctly heard Isabel's name announced, she instantly concluded that such was our heroine's station.

"My daughters are no longer under tuition, and have therefore perfect leisure to enjoy the society of their cousin, Miss St Albe," said Lady Belville, with marked emphasis.

Poor Mrs Fogarty, covered with confusion at perceiving the error of which she had been guilty, coughed most violently as she industriously displayed a French cambric handker-

chief, with flowers worked at each corner. At length, after two or three prefatory hems, she ventured to say, with a very congratulant air,—

“ I’m sure your Ladyship is most fort’nate in having past the time of edication with the young ladies, as one may say.—Now, besides a Parisian governess, I do assure your Ladyship, Haraminta and Hedwina have fourteen masters in the week.—Let me see—one for drawing; two for the musics; one for dancing; five for the languages; one for hastronomy; one for singing; one for painting on glass; another for painting on velvet; and another to teach Haraminta and Hedwina to get in and out of the carriage with grace and dignity!” —exultingly exclaimed Mrs Fogarty, as she finished the computation she had calculated on her fingers.

“ Prodigious!” ejaculated Lord Langrave. “ Pray, Ma’am, will you be so kind as to favour us with a display of one of your numerous accomplishments?” he added, addressing the eldest Miss Fogarty.

The unhappy Haraminta blushed and looked at mamma.

“ To be sure, my dear, do as his Lordship desires. Play, with Hedwina, that elegant duet ye larned of Mr Cramer last week. My daughters ought to play well, for they practise six hours every day of their lives !” cried Mrs Fogarty, drawing up her head to its highest pitch of elevation.

In compliance with the injunction just received, Haraminta and Hedwina sat down to the piano-forte, and most indefatigably exerted themselves to thump the instrument with manual force, in order to extract sound, in which their coarse red fingers certainly succeeded ; while the delightfully audible accompaniment of one, two, three, four, and the expression of earnest anxiety depicted on the countenances of the harmonists was inexpressibly ludicrous.

Meanwhile, Mrs Fogarty continued to beat time with her foot, her small grey eyes blinking such maternal delight, as to seem in imminent danger of quitting their sockets. At

length a loud crash of false chords proclaimed the finale of the piece.

“Astonishing execution !” cried Lord Langrave. “I never heard so much sound in my life !”

“Ah now !—I feel so much obliged to your Lordship ; but it is’nt only in music that my daughters excel, for they talk five different languages ; and then they larn to moddle, or make human figures, your Lordship knows ! Well, to be sure, I wish you could but see Hedwina’s Hercules !”

“But Lady Julia and Lady Emily, why did your Ladyships retire to that there inner room ? I am afeard you did not hear Haraminta’s and Hedwina’s duet,” anxiously exclaimed Mrs Fogarty.

“O yes,” replied Lady Julia, with agony in every feature ; “I assure you, Madam, the electric battery has been most powerfully felt even at this distance. We are almost deprived of sensation by the velocity of the sparks ; the repercussion of sound almost equalled that of the *aurum fulminans* !”

“ Really now ! but your Ladyship always does pay such charming compliments. And, Miss St Albe, I’m sure my daughters are also obliged to you, Ma’am, for, when they played the part that Mr Cramer calls the *Hadagio*, I saw you put your handkerchief to your face, just with emotion like !”

Isabel could with the utmost difficulty command her risible faculties, as she bowed acquiescence to the imputation ; while Sir Felix Pettito (who had lounged into the room, and, ever since his entrance, had been indefatigably employed in inspecting through his glass the Misses Fogarty) exclaimed, in the most evident horror,—

“ Petrify me ! if ever I saw such monstrosities—no ! not even in Ireland !”

The latter word always acted with a repulsive power on poor Mrs Fogarty. She, therefore, immediately made her *congé*, accompanied by her all-accomplished daughters and Lord Langrave, who, elevating the arm of the delighted mother, by holding her right hand considerably above the level of her shoulder,

begged leave to have the honour of attending the Fogarty family to their splendid equipage.

After having performed the important duty, his Lordship returned to the drawing-room almost convulsed with laughter.

“ Oh pardon me, Lady Belville. I feel I am committing a solecism in politeness by yielding so excessively to the influence of Momus ; but, ‘ really now——,’ ” Langrave was absolutely unable to conclude his sentence.

“ I can forgive you,” said Lady Belville smiling ; “ for there never yet was any thing so absurdly ridiculous as these same Fogartys ; but tell me—Is it true they were at the Duchess of Delborough’s the other night ? ”

“ Perfectly so.—And Miss Haraminta got up to exhibit in a quadrille, plunging about her *pieds de cochon à tout hazard*. But had we not better adjourn to the sale we purpose visiting, and discuss ancient pictures instead of living caricatures ? ”

“ Yes—I believe so,” said Lady Belville in

a hesitating tone. “ Miss St. Albe, will you accompany us ? ”

“ No, thank you, Ma’am, I shall remain at home, as I wish to write to Aunt Eleanor.”

In vain Lord Langrave entreated our heroine to alter her determination. She continued inexorable; and, as soon as Lady Belville and her daughters, with his Lordship, had left the house, Isabel retired to her apartment and addressed a letter to the Parsonage, which she had scarcely dispatched, ere she received the following epistle from Mrs Eleanor Fitzroy :—

TO MISS ST ALBE.

“ I SHALL not pain my dearest Isabel’s heart by attempting a delineation of all mine suffered at the trying moment of our mutual separation. I struggled to attain composure, yet keen were my feelings and many my anxieties. The former, reason and reflection have now meliorated; but the latter remain in their original force. Yes, my beloved child! when

I consider the present state of society, the selfishness of the world, the spirit of idleness and frivolity which characterizes its pursuits, and the innumerable dangers arising from the influence of bad example, I confess I tremble for the inexperienced and unsuspecting female on her introduction into fashionable life.

“ In how many instances has the beautiful simplicity of the youthful character, the touching ingenuousness of the unsophisticated mind, been totally lost, or partially perverted, by an habitual intercourse with associates, whose principles, if not radically wrong, are at least far from being practically right!—whose actions are rather directed by the omnipotent rules of modern fashion, than by the rational dictates of Christian piety! I know not any spectacle which strikes the reflecting mind with greater compassion than a young and lovely woman, who, infatuated by the amusements and dissipation of the world, forgets her accountability as a rational creature, and unremittingly devotes her time, her talents, and her constitution, to its worship! Her heart

gradually becomes enslaved and debased, her understanding relaxed, and her feelings corrupted by a constant participation in pleasures, which allow no space for the cultivation of religious improvement or intellectual progression,—for the recollection of Time or the preparation for Eternity ; while the habit of dissipation imperceptibly becomes a passion so engrossing in thousands, that, like Aaron's serpent, it devours the rest, absorbs every finer aim of the mind, and, Oh ! when it does become a passion, who can say, Thus far I will go and no further ! The best preservative, my Isabel, against the fatal contagion, is the sedulous exercise of those Christian graces which fortify the faculties of the soul, and improve the affections of the heart ! And, as an assisting preventative, I would warmly urge a sacred regard to the distribution of your time, the choice of your companions, and the regulation of your pursuits.

“ It is not in my eyes essential for a woman to be learned ; but if she has any leisure to bestow, when her other duties are perform-

ed, books (especially those of history) will extend her knowledge of the world, and of human nature, and furnish an agreeable relaxation, infinitely superior to the poor expedient of eternally frequenting public assemblies, talking scandal, or shuffling a pack of cards, to kill time !

“ I am inclined to think that many of the evils to which I have alluded result from the present style of female education, which, by inculcating a love of display in the acquirement and exhibition of superficial accomplishments, in a great degree also encourages vanity, that bane of lively females,—that weed which overruns and chokes the progress of a thousand graces ! Education is, indeed, an arduous and important task, which few mothers are qualified to discharge well, yet which I must ever think it is their province to superintend. Any person may teach a child how to become an artist ; that is, how to draw, or paint, or play on the piano forte mechanically ; but I do not call the attainment of those things education. A dancing or a mu-

sic master cannot teach a girl how to think or reflect. A mother alone must lay the foundation, though hired assistants may ornament and embellish.

“ *A propos* to music, I hope you will not neglect to avail yourself of your present residence in the metropolis, which affords the advantage of the best professors in that captivating science. In your case, I desire their instruction, because the accomplishment will ultimately reward the labour it requires, as, by nature, you are gifted with a fine ear and discriminating taste. But in how many instances is time lost, and money expended, when a young creature, not formed with organs which can distinguish true tones from false, is made to study for years, only in the end to become a mechanical performer! By continual practice, a girl may play well enough to afford some pleasure to others. Ambition to excel, and indefatigable application, may enable her to compass many difficulties; nevertheless, if nature has denied her the faculty of being able to judge or feel the meaning

of melody, the sounds or tones, which are delicious to the musical ear, are lost on hers, though measure or movement, commonly called time, may be ably understood.

“ All children naturally sing the popular chance songs they happen to hear, because it diverts them, and is attended with no effort ; yet I have heard many children very fond of singing, who (if I may use the expression) were quite mistuned. When that is the case, it should be a rule to parents not to teach them music, for even their proficiency in the science of harmony will never reward themselves ; it will never, as a gratification, lead them to the practice of it, as to the exercise of an enjoyment they love, nor express to them (which it should do) a sentiment. It will neither exalt the mind, nor touch the heart,—lead to the funeral pile, nor rouse to war ;—nor yet debase (by contrast) to what is vulgar or profane. A feeling composer can direct to all the passions, both right and wrong ; but the effect is only impressive to the genuine musical ear.

“ Will my dearest Isabel pardon such an intolerable digression, into which I have allowed myself to be unconsciously entrapped? I feel I need your indulgence on that score, as well as in many other respects; yet for the advice this letter contains, I shall not apologize, nor entreat forgiveness, knowing, as I do, that what the warmest affection prompts will be received with lenity, and treasured with gratitude, far beyond its proportionate value.

“ I can now only add my prayers, that Heaven may take you under its immediate protection, and enable you to pass through the many trials of life as best becomes an intelligent and an immortal being!

“ Farewell, dear child of my affection. Assure your excellent father of my unchanging love, and believe me now, and ever,

“ Your faithful and affectionate friend,

“ ELEANOR FITZROY.”

CHAPTER XX.

ISABEL ST ALBE TO MRS ELEANOR FITZROY.

(Written previous to the receipt of the foregoing letter.)

“ MY BELOVED AUNT,

“ I have thus long deferred writing, as having, in my last, informed you of our safe arrival in this gay metropolis, I judged it best to postpone the exercise of my ‘grey goose quill,’ until Time should have enabled me in some degree to form a judgment, respecting the relative characters of Lady Belville’s social circle, as you so particularly desired my opinion on the subject.

“ A fortnight’s acquaintance is certainly a short period on which to venture an estimate,

and as I am not a disciple of Gall and Spurzheim, I am consequently deprived of the aid of craniological principles to guide my discovery, as to the peculiar propensities and dispositions of each individual. I dare not even trust Lavater, (who, I fear, is not always infallible,) and must, therefore, place my reliance on the small share of penetration with which nature has thought proper to endow me.

“ To commence with Lady Belville. Her Ladyship is still a very fine woman, though a little *passé*, yet, only that I have declined all assistance from physiognomy, I should say there is at times a *je ne sais quoi* in her countenance, a fire in her eye, and an expression in her smile, that is far from being prepossessing. Her manners are extremely polished, but slightly tinctured with *hauteur*. She appears to possess in an extraordinary degree the art of reading character, and I should imagine takes more pleasure in studying that of others than in revealing her own. She tells me the world has been her library; yet she seems conversant with modern literature, as well as

modern manners, and has a peculiar *tact*, that gives zest to remarks, that, on examination, you often find rather flippant than solid, but to which the brilliancy of her general address gives a noble and piquant air.

“ Lady Belville treats me with distinguished kindness and attention, and I feel pleasure in her conversation, as well as in cultivating an intimacy. She has not, however, shown so much confidence in my discretion, as to give me an absolute opinion, on almost any subject. She appears, indeed, to delight in insinuations rather than in candid avowal, and has occasionally dropped some hints respecting Lord Langrave, (a nobleman who frequently visits her,) certainly not to his advantage, and invariably concludes her strictures by saying, that nothing but the interest she takes in my welfare could induce her to say a word against *the agreeable devil*, (such is the sobriquet Lady Belville bestows,) and agreeable undoubtedly he is.

“ Lord Langrave possesses talent for a certain sort of entertaining trifling, an *esprit de*

société, which often enables persons to excel in conversation, in a more brilliant way than genius and information of a much higher stamp. He is extremely handsome too, both in face and figure. Lady Belville says he is five-and-thirty, but his Lordship does not appear near that age ; yet, notwithstanding the attractions I have enumerated, there is a something about Lord Langrave that, to my fancy, is far from being engaging. His look, at times, reminds me of the glance that

‘ Learning to lie with silence would seem true.’

And then he has one peculiar expression—Oh ! aunt Eleanor, I wish you could see that look ! it is so repelling, so heart-chilling, such a compound of irony and malice, that even at the moment Lord Langrave pleases most, when that strange expression lightens from his countenance, the curl of the lip, the ‘laughing devil in his eye,’ like the touch of the torpedo, benumbs and petrifies the feelings of his auditor.

“ The centipede, I fancy, lies hid beneath

the flowers of rhetoric, which often embellish Lord Langrave's language; if so, the properties of that insect may counteract the injurious effects of his insidious flattery, and thus prove the truth of the assertion, that one poison frequently repels the influence of another.

“ Such being my sentiments, Lady Belville need not fear that the citadel of your Isabel's heart would be in any danger, even should his Lordship commence the siege; but that I have not intimated, as to me it has always appeared dishonourable and absurd in a woman to make declarations of non-acceptance, when, perhaps, the very person she in idea rejects, entertains not the slightest notion of ever wishing to obtain her favourable sentiments.

“ Lady Julia St Albe's mind is a sort of literary *olla podrida*, a complete piece of mental patch-work, formed of ‘shreds and scraps of learning,’ and not half so useful an article as that which patch-work is generally employed to compose. She is one of those

sentimental ladies, who weep at elegant distress, and who bedew the remains of a luckless fly (whom a roaming disposition may have induced to enter the ewer that proved its tomb) with the tears of sensibility. She has skimmed the surface of literature, and is well versed in romances, Anacreontic poetry, and the nomenclature of various branches of science. Lady Julia has, of course, a female confidant, into whose friendly bosom she pours her whole soul, secure of meeting sympathetic feelings. That favoured being I have not yet seen ; she has, at least, a high sounding title, Lady Melessina Clementina Oberon, who has, I understand, favoured the world with a novel, entitled ‘ Effusions of Sentiment, or Phlogistic Imaginations,’ together with various sonnets and love songs, regardless of the fate of the Pierides, who, if I recollect right, were metamorphosed into magpies, for venturing to vie with the muses.

“ Lady Emily is one of those little nondescripts, who, perfectly harmless, flutter like

the gay butterfly in the sunshine of fashion's atmosphere ; she dances, flirts, sings, and

‘ Sends the soul upon a jig to Heaven.’

Lord Belville and his son, you know, I have not yet seen. Lady Belville tells me her Lord has, for years, been subject to a nervous complaint, which, at times, partially affects his reason, and, consequently, that his general manners are melancholy and morose. She also says that Lord Allanby is so devotedly attached to his father, that he never leaves him, and has even acquired a tinge of Lord Belville's despondency and reserve ; but that, in reality, he is far from being deficient in natural talent, and is, besides, extremely amiable.

“ I have now given you a sketch which I should not for worlds any other eye perused than your own ; but with my dear aunt Eleanor I have no disguise. Was Lady Julia to see it, she would say it was composed of ace-

tic acid, which ought to be united to fixed alkali, to repress its volatility !

“To you, who are acquainted with all the lions of this great emporium, it would be useless to enumerate the catalogue. Papa has escorted me to them all, and now that the Tower, Westminster Abbey, &c. have been visited, he generally spends his mornings in the British Museum, which, to his inquisitive mind, presents many objects of scientific interest. So devoted, indeed, is my father to literary pursuits, that we can scarcely ever persuade him to accompany us to the concerts, plays, routs, which continually occupy our evenings.

“*A propos*, Lady Belville has issued cards for a grand fancy ball ; but you will say, that my London diary resembles that of the fashionable belle in the Spectator. Truly, I blush for the folly I have written, but, I verily believe, there is some little electric conductor from my heart to the point of my pen, which impels the foolish thing to betray all the nonsense that is passing in the region of vitality. To say the truth, dearest aunt, I fear your

poor Isabel often forgets the little *beanséances* which fashion enjoins. But, like the snail, I generally retreat within my shell ; in other words, within the artificial armour of prudent reserve, beyond which I seldom venture even my horns. My naturally quick feelings, nevertheless, often betray me, particularly if affection calls them into play. For example, when Papa entered the room the other day with your last epistle, I flew across the saloon, (in which a number of people were assembled,) while tears of pleasure started to my eyes, as I involuntarily cried ‘ Give, Oh ! give me aunt Eleanor’s letter.’

“ The words were no sooner uttered, than I felt the imprudence of which I had been guilty in thus running about discovering my emotion. And, Oh ! that Lord Langrave did so regard me with an expression that seemed to say, What a rustic simpleton ! I really felt the blood tingle in my cheeks from absolute confusion, while Papa, pitying my awkward situation, said, ‘ My love, you had better retire to read this,’ giving me your letter. You may

be sure I did not wait for a second hint, but instantly effected my escape. Heigh ho! I verily believe that, after all, I shall soon become weary of this gay world, in which one is obliged to be continually in masquerade, (particularly as my domino is so badly arranged, that the real dress is for ever peeping out,) and wish to return to my dear happy Parsonage.

“ Pray, give my best love to Sir Hugh Tyrconnell, and tell him, that, amidst the vortex of gaiety in which I am now involved, there are many many moments when my thoughts revert to him and you with truest affection. Remember me also to my little circle of pensioners. I hope the Widow Lynch is quite recovered, and that Helen will soon be able to read. I must conclude, being summoned to attend Lady Belville. Papa unites in warmest remembrances with my dearest aunt Eleanor’s

“ Sincerely attached

“ ISABEL ST ALBE.”

CHAPTER XXI.

LORD LANGRAVE TO THE HONOURABLE
HENRY ALLINGFORD.

“DEAR HAL,

“CANS’T bear a stupid letter?—Then prepare to read one. Oh! Hal, Hal, a greater metamorphosis has befallen thy friend, than any e’er recorded, even by our plaguy school acquaintance, Ovid. From being an absolute Proteus in love, I am become fixed, faithful as the needle to the pole, and rival Pyramus himself, or any other hero of antiquity, in constancy to an ungrateful Thisbe.

“But what is now the magnet? methinks I hear thee exclaim.—An angel, Hal! whom even thou could’st not behold with indifference.

“ Oh ! Isabel St Albe ! (such is my charmer’s name,) thou art as far superior to every woman in creation, as the splendour of Heaven’s own lights to the artificial brilliancy of pyrotechnical stars !—There’s a simile, Hal ! by Jove, and not a bad one either. But I might as well have saved myself the trouble of invention, and said, ‘ Hyperion to a Satyr !’ To return to my story : This said Isabel is just fresh from the wilds of Ireland ; (better game never yet was started,) and is—What is she ?—

‘ Elle est sage, elle est belle,
Elle a beaucoup d’esprit, toujours de la gaïeté ;
A la grace elle unit la sensibilité.’

Confound her ! I don’t believe she has the latter perfection, or could she remain insensible to thy friend, Hal ? I, who have destroyed the peace of more women than there are waves in the sea, and can command the dear creatures with somewhat more success than Mr Canute evinced in his behest to the watery billows !

“ But she is not, cannot be so obdurate, so devoid of taste and feeling, as not to return my passion ; at least, when once I take the trouble to woo, in downright earnest, she shall, I swear by all the gods in Olympus, she shall return it, with the ardour, the tender devotedness, which are the orthodox characteristics of woman when she loves ! Ah ! the sly bewitching creature, when once I have fairly caught her little heart—when the downcast eye, the blushing cheek, the repressed sigh, shall betray the influence of *la belle passion*. Then, Hal,—revenge, the great attribute of the gods, shall be mine :—Yes ! she shall sue to me—kneel to me—worship me, for one of those glances which I now so freely bestow, to thaw the icy panoply that has hitherto resisted all my efforts. Yet, I shrewdly suspect, that a little volcanic fire lies hid beneath frigidity, like that of Mount Hecla ; and that, when it shall be blown by the breath of Monsieur Cupidon, it will burn strongly, clearly, brilliantly ; for Hal ! Hal ! I tell thee, she is a creature of

life, and light, and beauty ; of genius, sensibility, the very essence of affection ; and that, when she does love, it will be with the ardour of an Eloise, the constancy of a Penelope, and the purity of an angel !

“ Thou knowest thy friend is not addicted to ‘ the green-eyed monster,’ feeling his own glorious superiority to the common herd ! Yet, in truth, Hal, I am sometimes half-distracted, when I see Isabel’s whole countenance glow with expression—beam with happiness, and for what, think’st thou ?—when her prosing old father enters the room, forsooth ! though she has only been separated from him for three or four hours !

“ Oh ! Hal ! what a bore that said father is—such a canting volume of ethics bound up in—no ! not in ass’s skin, not in ‘ congenial calf ;’—give the devil his due, he’s clever ! aye, a deuced deal too clever for me, and is the only man beneath whose eye-beam Langrave ever trembled. If his daughter has a fault, ’tis of the same nature. She has—yes, I think she has, too much *esprit*, too much informa-

tion, (thanks to the old Quidnunc,) and I verily believe, could read the classics in the original tongues.—Prove that to me, my boy ! and D. I. O. shall be thy friend's motto. At sight of Homer, Virgil, Horace, the scared loves and graces instantly fly off ; as well might the torrid and the frigid zones unite ! No lady skill'd in all the *ologies* for me ! who will give you metaphysical whys and wherefores for every pleasure inexistence :—

‘ Oh ! who that has ever felt rapture complete,
Would ask how he felt it, or why it is sweet ?
How rays are confused, or how particles fly
Through the medium refin'd of a glance, or a sigh.
Is there one, who but once, would not rather have
known it,
Than written with Harvey whole volumes upon it ?’

There's poetry ! I tell thee what, Hal ! thy friend must be gone whole ages in love, since he has hazarded a citation, and that in the language of the Muses ; though now, It hink on't, thou hast often had the impudence to tell me, that my mind resembled a quotation-book ;—agreed ; 'tis better than a blank one like to thine.

“ But, Isabel has no pretension ; only for her illumined face, her expressive smile, and,

‘ Oh that eye, that’s in itself a soul !’

together with a remark, now and then ventured, which contains, as we say in the classics, ‘ *multum in parvo*,’ you absolutely would not imagine her more than what the world calls a well educated woman : whereas, she has, by all that’s lovely, Hal ! I’m sure she has, more information, wit, and talent, than thee, thy friend, and half our glorious club associates put together, united to the perfect innocence of childhood ! The only consolation I derive from her superior genius is, that she has, a better chance of escaping the diabolical fangs of Lady Belville, (to whom she is niece, and under whose roof she will some time remain,) and yet, that deep-scheming devil already seems to have acquired some influence o’er the dear confiding creature, who, ‘ artless herself, esteems the world so too.’

“ Oh that I were not in that cursed Lady Belville’s power ! But thank the Fates she’s in

mine ! And, if ever I discover that she insinuates aught to my disadvantage, may I be hanged, Hal, if I do not reveal the whole arcana, though I should be crush'd myself beneath the ruin I should cause. Even to thee, thou choice spirit ! I have not disclosed the secret, which thou knowest exists between that female Machiavel and myself. In that respect, at least, ' Brutus is an honourable man ; ' and when thou, my Pylades, ventured to cast an imputation on Lady Belville's fair fame, as it is called, did I not tell thee she was a dragon of female virtue ? which I impute more to the coldness of her feelings, (if feelings she has,) than to moral principles, piety, and so forth.—But,

‘ I detest that stalking marble grace,

Which looks as if the heart had left its place.’

“ What think'st thou, Hal, of her having offered me thirty thousand pounds, if I would consent to take her daughter, Lady Julia, by way of income-tax ; who, poor dear, is over head and ears in love with me—the only proof

of taste she ever showed. By Jupiter, I could hardly keep my countenance as I civilly declined the proposal, and talked of my disinclination to the marriage state ; while, all the time, I knew the clever hypocrite was as much *au fait* at the nature of my sentiments as I was myself. Marry Lady Julia !—I would esteem the hangman's head-gear a better acquisition than the fool's-cap of Hymen with that insufferable female pedant for a spouse. Oh what a contrast to my lovely all-intellectualized Isabel !—

“ I tell thee what, Hal, if ever thy friend does commit that greatest of sins, matrimony—it shall be in a novel, striking, unheard-of sort of way. For instance, if a parson must unite the hands of me and my beloved, why I shall e'en go to church on a velocipede, or on a hydropede, or in a balloon, (though in infinite danger of the caloric of my disposition inflating our aërial *voiture*, causing combustion, and precipitating me and my enamoured spouse-elect into the midst of the sea,) rather than in the family coach, with the four long-tailed

steeds tricked out for the occasion ;—the consequential portly *cocher*, with his three-cock'd hat decorated with ribbons, and enormous *bouquet* stuck in his button-hole, whirling away his victims to destruction, and a train of relatives sporting white favours,—spinsters envying the candidates for wedlock,—while those who are trammell'd with the fetters of that most happy state rejoice in a fresh accession to their companions in misfortune, even at the very moment that, with smiles deceitful, they congratulate you on your entrance into ' the holy pale.'

“ Oh Liberty, glorious Liberty ! Langrave will not resign thee.—If I chose, Hal, I know I might gain Lady Belville's interest, and Isabel St Albe would be mine *tout de suite*. But, no, thy friend shall not ' so foul, so false a recreant prove.' All I want is to cheat away the lagging hours in the agreeable pastime of instructing the dear delightful creature in the science of love ! And then—Why, by Jove, Hal, I don't know what I shall do then. I am almost done up ; but the King's Bench is a

much pleasanter asylum than the ‘durance vile’ of an Hymeneal prison, even should the bars be gilt with bullion ; and I should rather figure in the Newgate Calendar than in the matrimonial gazette ; for,—

‘ Ricuso, detesto,
Il nodo funesto,’

And I have dernier resorts enough without having recourse to that last and worst. Hal ! should I want thy services—Ar’t ready to do my bidding ? I know thou art ; and that I need only say, ‘ My gentle Puck, come hither,’ and the call will be forthwith obeyed.

“ The *cacoëthes scribendi* shall no longer urge this pen, ‘ slave of my thoughts, obedient to my will.’

“ Adieu ! *pro tempore*, thy

“ LANGRAVE.”

CHAPTER XXII.

IT may appear strange, that, to a man of Mr St Albe's sound sense, the true characters of Lady Belville and Lord Langrave should remain concealed beneath the garb of hypocritical disguise. But St Albe was more a book-worm than a man of the world ; he was inclined to take things and persons as he found them,—not prone to doubt ; and he had so long lived a recluse from the dissipated scenes of life, that, except some peculiar circumstances called forth his natural penetration, he was so little versed in the ways of modern deception, as scarcely to suspect its existence in the polished circle in which he had moved for the last six weeks.

Mr St Albe had by no means a high opini

of Lady Belville ; but he thought she was quite as respectable as any other fine lady of the present day, and her having passed irreproachably through “ the fiery ordeal ” of constant association with a dissipated world of fashion, contributed to render him less clear-sighted in discovering the darker shades of her character ; and, indeed, on reflection, he was often tempted to condemn himself for having imagined that Lady Belville had been instigated by a sinister motive to the invitation she had given his daughter, and to censure his having communicated that suspicion to Mrs Eleanor Fitzroy in the conversation they had together held after its arrival.

As to Lord Langrave, Mr St Albe scarcely gave himself the trouble to study his character. He saw that his Lordship was a handsome, dashing, agreeable man, and could perceive that he paid considerable attention to Isabel ; but our heroine was now the fashion in town. Even had her claims to personal superiority been less conspicuous, novelty would probably have procured her that enviable

distinction ; yet, amidst the host of candidates eager to obtain her smiles, Mr St Albe could not discover that any individual was by his daughter particularly favoured. Besides, his knowledge of her prevailing tastes and opinions was such, that he did not fear her affections would fall ready victims to the first man who thought it worth his while to solicit their possession.

From the slight view he had taken of Lord Langrave, he did not imagine that he was by any means congenial to Isabel's disposition or sentiments, nor the man likely to entrap her heart in Cupid's snares. He thought that, however agreeable she might find his conversation, or fascinating his general manners, yet that a higher tone of character, a more exalted mind, and more unsophisticated feelings, must centre in him, who should subject his beloved child to the influence of that passion, which, from his acquaintance with the natural sensibility and tenderness of her character, he almost dreaded her to experience, being well convinced that the potency of love, which ele-

vates in a degree the most common-place persons, and inspires warmth in the coldest breasts, would be powerfully, truly felt by her, whose whole being was animated by the most ardent enthusiasm, and the deepest feeling. If his Isabel ever yielded to the dominion of an attachment, Mr St Albe was assured it would not be that “*ignus fatuus* gleam of love,” which fancy for the moment kindles, and as rapidly dispels. Hers, he thought, would rather be the bright pure flame, that neither adversity can extinguish, absence quench, nor time destroy, and which, like those subterraneous fires that duration cannot allay, nor art subdue, would burn clearly, truly, warmly, to the last.

Such being Mr St Albe’s opinions, it is not surprising that his anxiety was so little alarmed at the attentions of Lord Langrave, nor that he experienced so small a portion of distrust with respect to Lady Belville. He thought that at some one period Isabel must venture on life’s stormy ocean ; and he trusted, that an Almighty Providence would be

her pilot at the present, as much as at any future epoch. With parental vanity, he was gratified at the attentions she received,—the admiration she excited; and he wished the last magic touch of fashion (whose influence even St Albe confessed) to be given to her general manners. He was also desirous that his daughter should have what is called a finish, from the best London masters, in those various branches of education in which, under the superintendence of the accomplished and excellent Mrs Eleanor, she had already made such considerable proficiency. St Albe knew that, notwithstanding the cultivation of her mind, and the strength of her natural understanding, yet that, in point of worldly knowledge, Isabel was a perfect child; but he also felt assured, that although she might occasionally transgress against the sovereign rules of mere fashion, her errors would be trifling and unimportant; for that, in general conduct, or in any question in which true delicacy, feminine feeling, or sound sense, could

be authorized to determine, Isabel's decision would be prompt, correct, and prudential.

Those considerations rapidly crossed in succession Mr St Albe's mind, after the perusal of a letter he received from his sister, in which she had mentioned some circumstances, which speedily obliged him to return to the Parsonage ; and the results of his meditations were, that he would not selfishly take his beloved child from the gay scene in which she was engaged, to bury her charms in the seclusion of retirement, but that she should remain for some time longer under the protection of Lady Belville. He did not quite like the scheme of Isabel's going to the Continent, as distance would then so widely separate them. Still there were many reasons which urged him to consent to the proposed expedition. Mr St Albe thought his daughter's ideas of the world in general would expand by travel, and that they had hitherto been confined within a sphere rather too limited. A visit to a capital so unrivalled in magnificent collections of the *chef-d'œuvres* of antiquity as Paris would gratify

her taste ; and her judgment in many branches of the fine arts might there be formed on the choicest models. In the French metropolis she was also to meet her uncle, who would be Isabel's natural guardian, in case any event should occur to deprive her of the protecting care of St Albe, and with whom, consequently, he wished her to become acquainted.

On summing up such numerous arguments, the fond father decided on accepting the invitation Lady Belville had again urged in a confidential interview, and resolving not to defer compliance, lest selfish feelings might too warmly plead and urge him to deprive Isabel of so many advantages, he hastened to Lady Belville's *boudoir*, and, with thanks, assented to his daughter's remaining in town, and subsequently accompanying her to the Continent. " But," added Mr St Albe, " may I request that the subject of our conversation be not for the present confided to Isabel, as I do not purpose leaving London until after the fancy ball, and should not wish

to damp my dear child's spirits prior to that gay event, by a communication of my necessary departure?"

"Certainly," said Lady Belville; "you may depend on my obeying your injunctions. But silence, here comes Isabel herself. I shall leave you *tête-à-tête*, for I have just received an epistle from my Lord, which I must retire to read;" so saying, she left the room as Isabel entered, exclaiming,—

"Oh! Papa, I have been in search of you, for I heard the postman's welcome knock, and the servant told me you had had a letter; was it from the dear Parsonage?"

"It was," replied St Albe; "but, Isabel, I must put your sex's curiosity to the test, for I will not show you aunt Eleanor's epistle."

"She is ill! Oh! dearest father, is she ill?" cried Isabel, turning an ashy paleness, and seizing her parent's hand, whilst her own trembled as she grasped it.

"No, no, she is well, in perfect health, my dear foolish girl," said Mr St Albe, as he fondly kissed his daughter's cheek, to which

such an assurance brought back the rosy current with redoubled brilliancy.

“ Your aunt, my love, is too busily employed in continuing her attack on Sir Hugh Tyrconnell’s heart, to think even of indisposition. But *à propos*, Isabel, I have news for you ; my sister tells me that the Baronet’s nephew, Albert Tyrconnell, is engaged to be married to a young and beautiful widow, named Monteith, but that their union is not to take place for several months. Eleanor says Sir Hugh was by no means communicative on the subject, but merely told her of the intended event, adding, that he felt it his duty to state that Albert’s demand for the five thousand pounds had been amply accounted for, and his character fully justified, by some circumstances attendant on his present attachment. I believe my sister mentioned to you that pecuniary transaction.”

“ Yes, and I always thought it would be satisfactorily explained. If fame says true, this Mrs Monteith will be a most happy woman, for Mr Tyrconnell’s character is, I un-

derstand, unblemished, and, besides, he is an absolute hero. How I do admire heroes, Papa," Isabel artlessly exclaimed.

St Albe laughed as he said, "It is fortunate, my child, that none of your numerous train are present to witness such a declaration."

"Oh dear! I do not think there is one real hero in my train, as you call it; they are all carpet knights, 'capering in a lady's chamber;' or Knights of the Round Table, or any thing, in short, rather than"—Isabel stopped, and slightly blushed.

"Than what?" asked St Albe.

"Than what I have heard of Mr Tyrconnell, Papa."

"Really! I did not know that military achievements had such infinite charms for you, Isabel; but General Montford's eulogiums of his favourite Tyrconnell have, I suppose, elevated him in your mind to the rank of a Cæsar or an Alexander."

"Yes, far beyond either, for the General says, that Mr Tyrconnell's bravery in the field is only one of his perfections; that in

private life his virtues exceed all praise; that his understanding is cultivated, his heart excellent, his manners polished, and his genius brilliant—

‘None but the brave deserve the fair;’

the enthusiasm of valour must, in some degree, exalt a man’s character; and if ever I am silly enough to fall in love, Papa, it positively must be with a hero!”

“Admirably resolved! Then, I fear, Lord Langrave has no chance,” said St Albe archly.

“Lord Langrave! Oh no! no, indeed! But how foolish was I to fancy you in earnest,” Isabel added, looking quite provoked at her own credulity. “Well, I shall have my revenge some time or other, when I shall give you ‘A Roland for an Oliver,’ as they said in the farce last night. But my milliner waits to receive orders for the dress I am to wear at Lady Belville’s fancy gala. By the bye, I am delighted that her Ladyship has consented to admit a few masks, it will so much enliven the

scene. I can delay no longer. Adieu, then, thou dear, saucy, quizzing Papa, until we meet again ;” saying which, Isabel tripped gaily out of the room, St Albe exclaiming—

“ That is not Milanie’s gracefully measured step.”—“Never mind, ’tis nature’s,” Isabel cried in a life-inspiring tone, as she turned archly round her playful blooming countenance, held up the first finger of her right hand, and skipped away with the air of a Euphrosyne.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE letter Lady Belville had received was to the following purport :

THE EARL TO THE COUNTESS OF BELVILLE.

“ ‘ MENTAL stagnation ! ’ How sincerely do I wish your Ladyship could prove the truth of your assertion. But, no ! so far from being in a state of apathetic feeling, a constant irritation of mind, an inward strife, a useless repentance are my bitter portions. I know from experience, that ‘ conscience is the straight-waistcoat of the soul. It winks by day, but never sleeps by night.’ Oh ! Lady Belville, I am not the Sybarite, imagining myself annoyed by the folding of a rose-leaf on my

couch. No ! for the prickly thorns of remorse, and the stings of a mental monitor reproaching me for dishonourable deception, banish the balmy influence of ‘ nature’s sweet restorer,’ far from the pillow of your unhappy husband.

“ How often, during the solemn stillness of the midnight hour, has imagination pictured the spectral figure of my departed father, leading the seraph form of Isabel St Albe to the bed-side of his wretched child, and exclaiming, in a hollow and sepulchral tone, ‘ Retribution ! Justice !’ How often have I startled from my miserable couch, pressed my aching forehead, and darting my pained vision into ‘ the darkness visible’ of my chamber, asked myself, whether all was but a dream ? or, whether the spirits of another sphere are not sometimes permitted to visit the wretched inhabitants of this lower world, to warn them from continuance in iniquity,—to remind them of their final and eternal doom ! And yet, Lady Belville, you, the chief instigator in the paths of error we so long have trodden, you can sleep, you can smile, and, smiling, can deceive.

“ The bite of the Tarantula can be cured by music ; but say, Oh, say ! where have you found an antidote for the maddening suggestions of remorse ? The celestial harmony of the Heavenly orbs would be but discord to the ears of him, who, conscious of falsehood, of having betrayed the dying wishes of a parent, would fancy their melodious movements but the deep solemn knell of his own everlasting condemnation ! Yet, need I be surprised ? for was not my own soul’s lethargy of long duration ? For many many years was I not callous to the voice of conscience, dull to its awakening call, even

‘ As the sluggish weed that rots on Lethe’s stream ?’

“ But that indisposition, which is fast undermining my constitution, and is leading me with rapid steps unto the grave, has torn the veil from before mine eyes. I am no longer under the influence of a ‘ mental torpedo.’ I have aroused from the infatuating dream, yet have not courage to acknowledge my er-

rors, to break my fetters, or to publish my shame! For, Oh, Henrietta! (tenderness will guide my pen,) strong, great is still thy power over the heart of Belville! The mask, it is true, has fallen! I see thee as thou art—not vested in the white spotless robes of purity and innocence, with which my fancy loved to adorn thee in the confiding days of youthful passion. Yet I cannot, will not, release my soul from thy seductive thralldom. Continue, then, to hold the string, and guide the puppet Belville! But, Oh, strain it not too tight! for I tell thee, Henrietta, if in any way thou plottest aught against the peace of Isabel St Albe, beware the consequences! Let her come here,—I wish to see, to know her, and promise apparent calmness at the meeting. I trust St Albe will not accompany her,—both would be too much.

“As to any compact with Lord Langrave, the very idea strikes my soul with horror! What! seduce an innocent and confiding woman into a marriage with a profligate *roué*, whose silence we have purchased, and whose

services we have bribed with a few paltry thousands ! Oh never, never may such a crime swell the black catalogue of my vices ! How could you think of sacrificing Julia to him ? —Thank Heaven he refused her ! To your other scheme I do accede. If Isabel can bring herself to wed Allanby—let them be united ; I consent ; but remember no compulsion must be used. And, to say the truth, I do not think it probable that a lovely woman, such as you describe Isabel St Albe, will experience any feelings save those of cold indifference for our son. Yet do I truly love poor Allanby, for his attentions to myself have ever been unremitting. And why should my boy be answerable for the defects of Nature, if, in capricious mood, she has placed him amongst that class of torpid beings who

‘ Eat and drink and sleep.—What then ?

Why then !—They eat and drink and sleep again.’

“ My pen, forbear !—How strange, that even writing to thee, Henrietta, beguiles me into passing levity and forgetfulness of that

never-dying worm which gnaws my very vitals!
But so great is the eternal influence of that
passion, which I have felt in all its energy,
and which only seemed reciprocal in thee,
that it doth sometimes almost banish thought.

“ Farewell ! Through weal and woe,

“ Your faithful, though unhappy,

“ BELVILLE.

“ *Paris, ———*”

CHAPTER XXIV.

THERE is nothing more galling to a man of a high generous spirit, and honourable feelings, than to find his conduct misinterpreted, and attributed to motives the most foreign to the genuine sentiments of his heart. Great, therefore, was the surprise and consternation of Albert Tyrconnell on receiving his uncle's letter, and perceiving, by its contents, the strange error which Sir Hugh's perverted sentiments had led him to adopt from the perusal of Mrs Monteith's communication.

Albert made every allowance for the misapprehensions of a mind warped by adversity, and turned from its natural course by the current of misfortune ; still he could not help feel-

ing hurt and offended at the indelicate and absurd conclusion which the Baronet had drawn, and, under the influence of a wounded spirit, Tyrconnell immediately addressed a letter to his uncle, in which, in the most respectful style, he vindicated himself from the revolting idea of ever having considered Rose Monteith in any other light than as a sacred deposit committed to his care by her departed husband. But, regarding the widow of his father's friend with affectionate respect, Albert declared, that he esteemed it his duty to guard Mrs Monteith with zealous attention in a foreign land, until circumstances should enable her to return to England; from the performance of which duty, Tyrconnell added, he was not to be deterred by the misconceptions of his uncle, nor the malicious misrepresentations of the world. The settlement Sir Hugh had proffered, his nephew coldly and firmly declined, at the same time that he returned thanks for the receipt of his own income; but the concluding allusion of the Baronet's letter with respect to the reversion of the Tyr-

connell estate, Albert treated with perfect silence, although, in truth, that little sentence had wounded his high spirit more than any other part of the epistle ; so much so, that he dared not trust himself in replying to the insinuation, lest he might forget the respect which his uncle's character, relationship, and general conduct to himself deserved.

Sir Hugh, on perusing his nephew's sentiments, was not one iota changed in his previous opinion, but considered him as a proud fool, who would one day repent having refused an independence. Indeed, it was after the arrival of Albert's second letter that Sir Hugh had given any information on the subject to Mrs Eleanor Fitzroy ; for, from having repeatedly discussed the probability of his nephew's marriage in his own mind, he had ended by so absolutely impressing the conviction on his senses, that it would have been almost morally impracticable to have persuaded the Baronet of the error of that judgment which he had so unjustifiably and strangely formed.

The possibility of the world casting any imputation on Mrs Monteith's character in consequence of his own attentions, would never have entered Albert's mind, were it not for the suggestions of his uncle ; but, after the perusal of Sir Hugh's letter, Tyrconnell thought it best to guard against insinuations in future, and, therefore, without acquainting Rose, either with the receipt of the Baronet's epistle or his own precautionary fears, in his next visit Albert gently intimated, that, should it meet Mrs Monteith's approbation, he would place her under the protection of a respectable family residing in Geneva, and would himself undertake a journey to England, in order to try and prevail on her late husband's relatives to atone for their cruel neglect and injustice, by acknowledging the widow of the gallant Monteith, and admitting her within the sanctuary of their social circle. But, at the same time, Tyrconnell solemnly exacted a promise from his afflicted friend, that she would never disclose to Monteith's connections the pecuniary assistance he had himself afforded, as, in that

case, his present solicitations on her behalf might be imputed to the meanest of motives, that of hoping to obtain remuneration to himself.

With the utmost difficulty Albert succeeded in gaining the assurance he required, as with enthusiasm the grateful Rose exclaimed, —“ May Heaven ever pour it choicest blessings on your head in rich abundance ! I will not curb your generous efforts.—For, Oh ! it would solace my departing hours did I pass them in the bosom of my beloved husband’s family, near the spot which holds the hallowed ashes of my father !—that spot where an attachment, which survived the shock of penury, neglect of friends, and lapse of years, was formed and cemented in eternal ties !—One sole regret I feel !—’Tis leaving that to which my widowed heart yet clings in fondness—the land where rests all that remains of him who——Forgive my useless sorrow—go on your generous pilgrimage—God for ever bless you !”—fervently ejaculated the weeping

Rose, as, drowned in tears and overcome with emotion, she instantly retired, leaving Albert to perfect the arrangement of those plans his noble nature had suggested.

CHAPTER XXV.

HAVING placed Mrs Monteith in a private family, where every attention was paid to her declining health, Tyrconnell commenced his journey, which he speedily completed, and the object of which he eventually accomplished. His ingenuous countenance, dignified manners, and candid narration, had their effect, even on the proud heart of Mr Monteith. The account of his son's death had softened the haughty feelings of his nature; and he not only consented to receive Rose as his daughter, but also desired that the remains of Captain Monteith might be brought over to be interred in the burial-place of his ancestors.

Pride, we fear, more than affection, induc-

ed such a determination ; but knowing the consolation it would afford the sorrowing Rose, Albert gladly hailed the proposal, and promised to make every necessary arrangement on his return to Switzerland. Tyrconnell then took leave of the residents of Monteith Abbey, and immediately proceeded to London, from whence he dispatched a letter to Geneva, in which he communicated the happy success that had fortunately crowned the object of his journey to England.

As his stay in London would be so very limited, Albert determined to remain *incognito* during his residence in the metropolis, both from a desire to avoid the trouble of receiving visits, and the formal obligation of repaying them ; and also lest, should his uncle hear of his excursion to England, Sir Hugh might attribute his sudden return either to a lurking desire to court his friendship, or a secret hope of being summoned to Tyrconnell Castle. The splendour of Albert's military career, and the distinguished notoriety of his general character, would, in the opinion of many

persons, have justly entitled the youthful hero to such a favour; but Tyrconnell wished to avoid, rather than court discussion on his own affairs; and as the singular conduct of his uncle would, he well knew, be very generally canvassed in a certain circle, was his arrival publicly announced, he resolved to abide by his first decision, and to remain *incognito*.

A visit to his old friend and commanding officer, (General Montford,) Albert, however, was determined to make. Great was the joy and surprise of the General, on seeing his young compatriot in arms, for whose valour, intellect, and worth, the gallant veteran had ever entertained the highest respect and affection; and when he shook Tyrconnell's hand, and cordially bade him welcome to the land of freedom, Albert felt animated by the truest pleasure, as he returned the warm pressure, and expressed sentiments of reciprocal gratification at the renewal of their friendship.

“ But Tyrconnell, my brave fellow !” said the General, “ you must accompany me to Lady Belville's grand fancy ball this evening.

I have a *carte blanche* to bring whom I please, and I want to judge if the belles of this country have a chance of entwining the rose with the laurel, which Fame has already wreathed around your warrior's brow.—Come, come ! I will take no denial ;—you know I have often played the Commander-in-Chief, and ever found in you ‘ the will to do, the soul to dare.’ ”

“ I should feel the greatest pleasure in acceding to your proposal, General,” said Tyrconnell, gracefully bowing ; “ but reasons of a private nature induce me to wish that my present residence in this gay metropolis should remain unknown.—I fear I must therefore decline, what would otherwise afford me the highest gratification to accept.”

“ My dear Albert, you may accompany me without the slightest chance of detection. The entertainment is nominally a fancy ball ; but the disguise of a mask will, I know, be permitted, for, by the permission of Lady Belville, I intend to wear one, for the purpose of hiding this old ugly phiz of mine !—Now, it

really is a thousand pities, that your handsome countenance should not be seen to full advantage.—Nevertheless, if your vanity can submit to the degradation of concealment beneath a mask, I think you will enjoy the festive scene. You are, if I recollect right, an absolute worshipper of female beauty, and I promise you introduction (in whatever form you assume) to a daughter of Erin,—heavenly as a poet's dream,—lovely as the Hourii of Mahomet's Paradise,—fascinating as an Aspasia, and

‘ Chaste as the icicle on Dian's temple,’

without its chilling frigidity.”

“ Indeed!—Such a glowing description thaws all my previous doubts,—they ‘ melt into thin air.’ Resistance, General, is no longer practicable ; and although, I fear, I am wilfully encountering Nature's artillery of charms, infinitely more hazardous and powerful than the din of war's engines, or the strife of contest, yet, I hope, I am too good a soldier to flee from love's arrows, even when

flashing from the inexhaustible arsenal of sparkling eyes, ‘ a lovely luminous host,’ and winged by that slyest of archers, the Paphian boy himself!

————— ‘ Let conquerors boast

Their fields of fame, he who in virtue arms
A young warm spirit against beauty’s charms ;
Who feels her brightness, yet defies her thrall,
Is the best, bravest conqueror of them all ;’ ”

sportively declaimed Tyrconnell.—“ But tell me,” he added, “ what is the name of this Hibernian goddess, against whose potent spells I must try to guard my vulnerable heart ? ”

“ Isabel St Albe.—She is niece to Lady Belville, and has lately made her appearance in the hemisphere of fashion. She is a planet of the very first magnitude,—has eclipsed all the minor luminaries,—and, whenever she appears, her numerous satellites attend, happy at being permitted to revolve within her luminous orbit.”

“ Then, I fear,” said Albert laughing, “ she is such ‘ a bright particular star,’ that it would be utterly impossible to pluck her down

from her high sphere, to tread this terrestrial globe with any of the sons of men. What chance, therefore, could a poor mortal like myself, neglected by Plutus, and every other mythological deity, have of success?—But, General, what characters shall we choose?”

“The day is arrived, and I absolutely have not yet selected mine,” returned Montford. “But, come, let us adjourn to the masquerade warehouse, and there decide on attire, in which we hope to achieve triumphs, that shall far excel, in number and brilliancy, those of the most renowned heroes, ancient or modern.” Thus saying, the friends entered the General’s carriage, which was in waiting, and immediately commenced their proposed expedition.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Nothing could surpass the splendour of the arrangements in the interior of Lady Belville's mansion on the evening of the long expected Fancy Gala. The extent of the building, and the large garden at the back of the house, rendered it peculiarly well adapted for such an entertainment.

On entering the spacious hall, (which was intended to represent oriental scenery,) the astonished guests imagined themselves absolutely transported to

“ The land of the cypress and myrtle.”

So exquisite was the fragrance of the orange and citron trees, the roses, geraniums, and

aromatic shrubs, which were so admirably arranged amongst the artificial foliage that thickly covered the walls and clung round the pillars at the entrance, as to render it nearly impossible to detect the illusion, all appeared so perfectly natural.

The stair-case was brilliantly illuminated with a profusion of variegated lamps, and seemed a marble ascent of many steps to an apartment, which beautifully represented the interior of an eastern palace, where the delighted guests were hailed by strains of the softest music, and were conducted by a group of lovely slaves, attired in the gorgeous habiliments of the east, to the foot of a throne surrounded with gold pillars, wreathed with many coloured lights, under the embroidèred canopy of which Lady Belville herself appeared in all "the pride and pomp of circumstance," adorned in magnificent scarlet and purple robes, brocaded in gold; a Turkish turban glittering with jewels formed her head-gear, and her fine bust and arms were sparkling with the purest brilliants.

The next apartment was intended to convey the idea of a Chinese Pagoda, and was inimitably designed and executed.

The third scene of illusion was sacred to Lady Julia, and represented, with classical correctness, the ruins of the Temple of Minerva. The subdued chastened light, intended to represent the mellow colouring of the moon, was admirably contrived, and beautifully touched the broken Doric pillars of the Parthenon, the storied entablature of the pediments and architraves, and the chequered marble pavement of the polished floor. In this temple, Lady Julia, attired as Minerva, and her friend, Lady Melissina Clementina, as the personification of Philosophy, appeared the presiding spirits of the sacred sanctuary.

On passing to the next scene, the garden (which had been covered in) presented a brilliant and magnificent *coup d'oeil*, sparkling with lights, adorned with flowers, breathing perfumes in superb alabaster vases and marble statues, whose polished whiteness contrasted with the dark green foliage, which was occa-

sionally permitted to retain its sombre hue, when effect required a contrast to the dazzling profusion of variegated lamps, elsewhere wreathed in fanciful and picturesque devices. Indeed, so admirably were the magic designs planned and executed, that the trees seemed absolutely bending beneath their own luxuriance, dipping their verdant branches into cooling fountains, which art had taught to play with harmonious murmur, while large mirrors were artfully disposed so as to reflect the brilliant scene *ad infinitum*. Arbours were filled by musicians concealed from the assembled throng, but whose instrumental melody aided the general enchantment. The garden was the crowded place of rendezvous, and consequently possessed more bustle and character than any of the festive apartments. The most expensive delicacies of the season were there liberally distributed by groups of Turkish Slaves, some bearing refreshments, others with silver censers burning perfumes, and Lady Emily St Albe, as Terpsichore, presided over the gay dancers, a part she was well calculated

to sustain, both from her little, light, agile figure, and her devotedness to that amusement, the goddess of which she personified to her assembled votaries.

Isabel, though lastly particularized, was not the least conspicuously charming amongst the members of Lady Belville's home circle. She was dressed in the simple attire of a vestal novice, but, pre-eminent in unadorned loveliness, the adventitious aid of fashion or of ornament could have added little to her native grace. She looked, indeed, more like "a pure and white winged agent of the sky" than a mere mortal, as she moved along leaning on her father, totally unconscious of the admiration she excited. The exquisite proportions of Isabel's figure appeared to the greatest advantage through the transparent drapery of her long white veil, while her chesnut tresses, allowed unrestrainedly to fall in natural luxuriance, partially shaded her finely turned throat, and flowed in wild profusion on a neck and shoulders of unrivalled contour. A rosary and crucifix hung to the girdle which en-

circled her waist, and completed our heroine's unpretending costume.

Mr St Albe was in his usual attire, and only waited until Lady Belville should be disengaged, to resign his precious charge to her care, earnestly wishing to leave a scene he did not think suitable either to his age or profession.

The rooms were nearly filled before General Montford and Albert Tyrconnell made their appearance, the former in the whimsical dress of one of Polito's menagerie men, and determined to show-off, in his assumed character, the motley assembly.

Albert's figure was so peculiarly striking and majestically beautiful, that General Montford had warmly urged him to represent

“ The God of life, and poesy, and light ;”

or else a Roman Senator, or a Roman Hero. To all such entreaties, however, Albert had laughingly refused assent, and had chosen the simple costume of the wandering Troubadour, to which the superiority of his manly figure,

and distinguished elegance of his unstudied attitudes, gave a cast of dignity and beauty, with which, perhaps, the character had never before been in an equal degree invested.

The embroidered scarf was gracefully thrown across his shoulders. He was unbonneted, which consequently displayed the classical form of his head, and the quantity of glossy dark hair that thickly clustered on

“ A brow where sat
Undaunted valour, and contempt of death.”

A small harp was slung round his neck, which he occasionally struck with the finished touch of a master. The disguise of a half mask prevented the regularity of Tyrconnell's finely formed features from being distinctly recognized, but the spirit of the beaming eye brooked not control, and appeared to flash with double brilliancy through the loop-holes of concealment. The ineffable sweetness of Albert's smile was also unobscured, and the expression of that smile, radiant in benevolence,

playful in mirth, and tender in sensibility, if once witnessed, could scarcely be forgotten.

After having paid their passing compliments to Lady Belville, as well as at the shrine of the sage Minerva, the friends proceeded to the illuminated garden. Albert's curiosity was strongly excited by the General's previous description of our heroine ; he therefore impatiently whispered as he entered, " This is really an enchanted garden ; but where, where is the Armida of the scene ? "

" Pazienza ! " said his companion in the same under tone ; " you will soon see an Armida in beauty, but wholly devoid of her deceptions allurements ; " and at the same moment, the General advanced to Isabel, (whom a projecting column had hitherto concealed from Albert,) and assuming his fictitious character, Montford extended his arm, and in a loud voice, cried,—

" Here is the Bird of Paradise, the most lovely in creation ! Troubadour, hast thou ever in thy wanderings seen one so perfectly beautiful ? "

“ No ! ” exclaimed Albert with enthusiasm.

“ Not in those climes where I have late been straying,
Though beauty long hath been there matchless deem’d,
Not in those visions to the heart displaying,
Forms which it sighs but to have only dream’d,
Hath aught like thee in truth or fancy seem’d.”

The tone of animated admiration in which such an apostrophe was uttered, caused the modest blush to mantle on Isabel’s cheek, as she replied,—

“ Sir Troubadour, thy language suits not the ear of the quiet Vestal, who, retired far from the busy scenes of life, should not allow the poison of flattery to assail her thoughts, nor should she credit aught that proceeds from the false adulatory tongue of man.”

Albert immediately struck his harp, and with infinite grace, and playful spirit, sung the following lines from a little French chanson :

“ Qui veut oïr qui veut savoir
Comment les Nonnes aiment ?
Elles aiment si religieusement,

Ce sont de si religieuses gens,
On les entend toujours disant
Ah Monsieur !—mais,—cette grille !”

The General laughed heartily as he turned round, and touching Albert, exclaimed,—

“ Behold the saucy impertinent parrot, retailing all the nonsense it has learned, and sometimes by chance making an application.”

Then, addressing St Albe, he continued,—

“ And here is another of the feathered tribe,—even the sage reflective owl. Most sapient bird ! thou seem’st to shrink from the dazzling glare of lamps, which emit a lustre too much like ‘ the garish light of day’ to suit thine eyes.”

“ Your remark is just,” returned St Albe.

“ As soon as I confide my inexperienced novice to the protection of the mistress of these revels, I shall hie me far from this ungenial scene, and fly to my own ivy-clad ruin.”

Notwithstanding Mr St Albe’s affected mirth, the expression of his countenance plainly evinced his anxiety to retire from the gay pageant, in which he was reluctantly oblig-

ed to mingle ; which the General perceiving, he lowered his natural voice to a whisper, and said,—“ St Albe, if you really wish to retreat, leave your lovely Vestal in my care, who, as an old man, may without impertinence solicit that honour.”

“ Most willingly. I know you will be her watchful guardian in this dissipated scene, in which nothing but the anxiety of parental affection could have induced me to participate. But Montford, who is your distinguished friend ?”

“ One of the most superior men in creation,” answered the General ; “ yet, by his own desire, I for this evening conceal his name. Will you, however, permit me to introduce him as a nameless Troubadour to your charming daughter ?”

“ Undoubtedly. I should never dream of questioning the respectability of any friend of General Montford.”

Mr St Albe then whispered the purport of his conversation to Isabel, pressed her hand as he wished her good night, and resigning her

to the General's care, he immediately retired.

Montford's arm was instantly accepted by Isabel. Albert looked an earnest desire to offer his services at the other side, yet seemed afraid to venture such a liberty, which the General perceiving, said,—

“ Miss St Albe, allow me to present, in sober seriousness, my most particular friend, who is really the legitimate offspring of two of Adam and Eve's descendants,—

‘ Can Bourbon or Nassau go higher ?’

But who, from some absurd reason, wishes to remain incognito this evening. Yet, notwithstanding the mysterious circumstance, your father has consented to an introduction, and will, I am certain, give his novice absolution even when he hears she has granted General Montford's unknown friend the honour of being her other supporter.”

Albert immediately profited by the hint, and, with a grace not to be resisted, offered his arm to Isabel.

It was accepted by our heroine, who, from that moment, conversed with Tyrconnell in a style of perfect ease, at which, on recollection, she was herself surprised. But there are circumstances that astonishingly contribute to banish the reserve of a first acquaintance, and her being amongst a crowd of almost total strangers, made Isabel consider the attendants, whom her father's approbation had sanctioned, almost in the light of intimates, as she walked between them gaily conversing on various topics, and indulging in occasional remarks on the motley crowd. Indeed, except when addressed by the masqueraders *en passant*, she seldom attempted to support character. Her conversation, therefore, was perfectly unrestrained and natural.

Lord Langrave, as "the Magnus Apollo," now approached, but the beams of his immortal brow were considerably clouded when he perceived how Isabel was engaged, and by whom she was attended.

"The golden fruit in this garden of the Hesperides is zealously guarded. But what

cannot an immortal shaft achieve ?” exclaimed Lord Langrave, as, in the imitated attitude of the Apollo Belvidere, he took pretended aim at the heart of the Troubadour, who spiritedly replied,—

“ Even such precious produce, Oh glorious Apollo ! was far less valuable than my inestimable charge. For

‘ Beauty, like the fair Hysperian tree,
Laden with blooming gold, hath need the guard
Of dragon watch, with unenchanted eye
To save her blossoms or defend her fruit.’

Yet, if thou wishest to prove the truth of a Troubadour guardian, thou wilt find him surpass in vigilance the serpent that Hercules vanquished when he obtained the prize. Thou wilt find a simple minstrel manfully dare the contest, though all the gods in Olympus shield and protect their favourite Apollo. For,—

‘ Mourir gaîment pour l’honneur et l’amour
C’est le devoir d’un vrai Troubadour !’

“ The Lord of the unerring bow,” at such

a challenge, looked the *cælestis ira* of a great immortal ; nor was the anger of the son of Jupiter diminished ; when the General, extending his arm towards the offended god of eloquence, exclaimed,—

“ Behold the lynx-eyed tiger, jealous of the spoils of the king of the forest ! But what comes yonder ? ” (he continued, addressing Sir Felix Pettito as he advanced, intending to personify Adonis, but much more resembling a French *petit maitre*.)—“ What comes yonder, I say ?—Is it a gaudy popinjay,—an insignificant lap-dog,—an impertinent monkey,—an animal of the asinine species, or—

‘ One of those ambiguous things that ape
Goats in their visage, women in their shape ? ’

Truly, my Master Polito hath ill instructed me in this my profession, for, beshrew me ! if I can tell what thou art ! ”

“ How near the god draws to the complexion of a goose ! ” cried an excellent Falstaff, just then bustling his way through the crowd.

“ A goose ! ” reiterated Sir Felix in mani-

fest horror. “ Petrify me ! if I am not Adonis ! ”

“ Thou need’st not be ashamed of being compared unto a goose, ’tis a classical similitude,” said a passing philosopher ; “ for Lycas, the Peripatetic, had a favourite bird of that species, who lived, died, and was buried with him !—Besides, what saved the Capitol ? ”

“ Thou would-be god ! ’stead of placing thy body on soft lettuces, I would repose it on a bed of nettles to sting thee with correctives,” sneered a snarling Diogenes.

“ Adonis ! What station in the approaching *lectisternium* is allotted thee ? ” squeaked a female *bel-esprit* triumphantly.

“ It matters not. ‘ Go fetch me a quart of sack, and put a toast in’t,’ ” returned the Baronet’s old antagonist Falstaff, again addressing him.

At such a request, united to so many prior attacks, poor Sir Felix retreated in dismay, so much frightened and perplexed, that his fa-

vourite “ Petrify me !” faltered on his lips, and scarcely was articulated.

A masked female Fortune-teller now advanced, requesting permission to predict the destinies of the party. She commenced with Isabel, and, after examining with attention the lines of her hand, the Gipsy exclaimed,—

“ Thou, Oh lovely Vestal, shall ever continue pure in mind and thought. But I prophecy that thou wilt break thy vows, and wilt not long remain in ‘ single blessedness.’ Yet, beware the many who will try to tempt thee to abjure thy virgin faith ; and trust not even those who seem to soar beyond the common level of us poor mortals,” she added, slightly glancing at Apollo, to whom she advanced, and said,—

“ Disdain not, Oh thou favourite of the Muses ! my knowledge, attained with trouble and acquired by experience. I dare not predict the fate of an immortal, but I will fancy for the moment that thou couldst become one of the sons of men, and tell thee, if thou wast transformed to such a being, what at least

would be thy characteristics. Nay, I will e'en imagine the metamorphosis to have taken place, and will address thee as one of the vulgar herd, investing thee with a fictitious title."

Then throwing back her head, and assuming an air of inspiration, the Gipsy uttered rapidly the following wild impromptu :—

"Most equally poized were the scales at your birth
By nature, who oft deals in frolic and mirth ;
For she swore that the balance should prove to be
true,
E'en though opposite qualities centered in you.
In one of the scales, wit and talent combin'd,
Conjointly to form no common-place mind ;
In t'other a heart, inconstant and truant,
The goddess now plac'd, to her plan still pursuant ;
United to fancy, which, free from control,
Could roam from the north to the southern pole ;
Yet never be stable, yet never be caught,
By angel, by woman, by devil, by aught ;
A Will-o'-the-Wisp in Cupid's dominions,
With a heart that's as gay and as light as his pinions,
A heart that is destin'd to rove to each flow'r,
' Just sip of its sweets, then fly from the bow'r.'

If such be the hero, the goddess exclaim'd,
Which, in frolicsome mood, my fancy has fram'd,
A message by 'Truth I'll send to each fair,
To guard her 'gainst wiles such as his to beware :
Then Truth from Olympus to Earth took her flight,
This talisman order'd by Nature to write,
With magical power, on woman's fond heart,
Beware of a Langrave,—he plays but a part."

The lightning of anger flashed from Apollo's eyes at the conclusion of such an address. The Fortune-teller (who was Lady Belville in disguise) had instantly retreated into the thickest part of the crowd; and Lord Langrave (determined to pursue and discover who she was, but not wishing to betray his vexation) turned round to Sir Felix Pettito, and with ill-assumed gaiety exclaimed,—

"Adonis! we celestial habitants of the 'holy hill' cannot bear contact with gross clods of clay. Come, then, let us together tread the bosom of the air, and hie us far from this terrestrial scene."

Sir Felix gladly retired with Lord Langrave; to Isabel's great satisfaction, who could

then once more enjoy, without interruption, Albert's fascinating and agreeable conversation.

“ Apollo does not seem much pleased with the poetic effusions of the Gipsy; but how, lovely Vestal, didst thou like her predictions?” demanded Tyrconnell.

“ That is not a fair question, to which I shall, therefore, not reply; for, truly, thou seem'st inclined to play the part of Father Confessor, rather than that of Troubadour. The Gipsy's advice, to warn me against your deceitful sex, was, I believe, particularly good; for Shakspeare, who well understood human nature, says, ‘ Men are April when they woo, December when they wed.’ ”

“ And what does he say of spinsters, charming novice?—‘ Maids are May when they are maids; but the sky changes when they are wives.’ ”

“ There is a noble warrior,” cried the General, interrupting the conversation, and pointing out a very distinguished figure in Roman costume.

“ The dress is indeed superb,” said Isabel ; —“ but, General, your approbation was almost as enthusiastic, as if the appearance of your prince of heroes, Mr Tyrconnell himself, elicited your praises. Do you know Mr Tyrconnell ?” she added, turning to the Troubadour.

Albert blessed the friendly disguise of a mask, which concealed his confusion, as he hesitatingly replied,—

“ Ye-s.”

“ Oh ! then, do tell me, is he all General Montford has painted him ? Virtuous, brave, talented, accomplished ; in short, such

‘ A faultless monster as the world ne’er saw ? ’ ”

“ No !—far, far from it,” said Albert earnestly.—“ If ever you become acquainted with Tyrconnell, you will perceive how exaggerated have been the partial eulogiums of his friend.”

Isabel looked disappointed, as she artlessly exclaimed, “ Oh ! I do not know why ; but I thought you were superior to the debasing

influence of———.” She stopped, conscious that, as usual, impetuosity of feeling had betrayed her into a trespass against the laws of *politesse*.

“ Of envy,—you would say,” returned Albert, smiling ;—“ and yet I cannot fancy how Tyrconnell can excite that passion, except when his praises issue from your lips.”

“ The panegyric was General Montford’s, not mine, for I have not the pleasure of being acquainted with his absent friend ; but my sexual curiosity has been so much excited, that I really wish for an unprejudiced opinion. Therefore, pray tell me candidly, what do you think of Mr Tyrconnell ?”

The General rubbed his hands with delighted glee, enjoying Albert’s confusion, and echoing Isabel’s words, as he exclaimed,—

“ Aye, Sir Troubadour ! what do you think ?”

Albert was so much perplexed, he almost felt inclined to reveal his name, but recollecting the embarrassment it would occasion Isabel, and the restraint it would impose dur-

ing the remainder of the evening, he contented himself with saying, in as careless a manner as he could assume,—

“ Pray, pardon me, fair Vestal, when I decline the task you have imposed ; but a gay, thoughtless, wandering Troubadour, is not equal to depict character, or to understand its peculiarities ; I shall therefore make an attempt, in which, perhaps, my powers may be somewhat more successful ;” and striking the chords of his harp, Albert commenced a lively Spanish romance, which he sung with so much grace and spirit, that he was soon surrounded by crowds of delighted auditors, and the style and expression of his performance was such, that Lady Belville (who had just entered in her former splendid costume leaning on Apollo) was immediately attracted towards General Montford’s party, when, perceiving Isabel, she said,—

“ Ah ! gentle novice, I have been in search of thee ; where is thy guardian guide, St Albe ?”

Our heroine for a moment resigned Mont-

ford's arm, as she advanced to Lady Belville, and said,—

“ My father has long since retired, and committed me to the care of General Montford.”

“ And who is your other companion, the graceful Troubadour ?”

“ Indeed I do not know, but he is a friend of the General.”

“ Not know ! Pardon my rudeness in repeating your words, Madam, but I am really surprised that Miss St Albe condescends to accept the services of an anonymous stranger. During the entire course of this evening, I have not been able to obtain a word, a glance, or even a smile !” said Lord Langrave sarcastically.

“ Miss St Albe should not dispense either too liberally,” rejoined Lady Belville coldly.

“ I am perfectly of your Ladyship's opinion,” Isabel replied, with some *hauteur*.

“ Come, come ! you know I only jest,” said her aunt, kindly taking our heroine's

hand, as she sportively added, " Let us try to discover the captivating Troubadour."

Vainly, however, she attacked the General, hoping to oblige him to betray Tyrconnell's name. With infinite humour he baffled all her inquiries, giving Albert successively every title in the nomenclature of birds and beasts ; but Lady Belville's curiosity, when once awakened, was not easily repressed ; she therefore still continued her fruitless interrogatories.

Almost wearied by her perseverance, the General at length exclaimed,—

" Well, perhaps, most lovely, but incredulous Princess, thou wilt believe me, when I name the object of your flattering research."

" The goldfinch of Tonquin, which sings so melodiously, that it is called the celestial bird ; give proof of thy harmonious powers, Oh ! divine songster," he added, touching Albert's arm.

Hitherto Tyrconnell's musical talents had only been exerted in gay light airs, but animated by a desire to charm, for which he

scarcely could account, he now obeyed the General's order, and after a little preluding, commenced a strain soft and flowing, to which he sung the following words :—

“ There's a bliss beyond all that the Minstrel has
told,

When two that are link'd in one Heavenly tie,
With hearts never changing, and brow never cold,
Love on through all ills, and love on till they die ;
One hour of passion, so sacred, is worth
Whole ages of heartless and wandering bliss,
And, Oh ! if there be an Elysium on earth,

It is this,—it is this !”

The tone of exquisite feeling and melting pathos, with which the Troubadour concluded the last line, breathing the very soul of melody and genius, entranced with delight all within his immediate sphere. Even Lord Langrave acknowledged its power, although his jealousy of the fascinating Troubadour every moment increased, and was, indeed, most plainly visible.

At first Albert's audience were

“ Too inly touched for utterance ;”

but at length a murmured whisper rose amongst the crowd, and “What a divine Minstrel ! who can he be ?” was on all sides eagerly demanded. But the current of popular feeling is often easily diverted, and fortunately for Tyrconnell, at the moment curiosity was at its height, a group appeared, so truly ludicrous, that all interrogation ceased, and the motley characters, with one accord, joined in the mirth the entrance of the party occasioned ; while the General laughingly exclaimed, “ Behold the far-famed Kangaroo followed by the long-armed Apes !”

As Mrs Fogarty, dressed as a Roman Matron, jumped forward, much in the style of the former animal, attended by Haraminta and Hedwina, with a little fat citizen cousin, whose rotundity of figure formed a striking contrast to their tall, raw-boned, awkward forms ;—the three wild creatures, attired in new stiffened muslin, over bright pink linings, and strung together with wreaths of large roses, strongly resembling peonies ; the trio intending to represent the Graces, but bearing

a much closer analogy to a personification of the Furies.

“ Ah my !” said Mrs Fogarty, “ here is her Ladyship at last. Well to be sure ! Really now, I thought I never should get through the crowd, for the drapery of a Roman Matron is so troublesome-like—that I mightn’t, but ’tis as bad as the robes of the Lord Mayor of Lunnon ! But, (in an audible whisper,) I hope your Ladyship admires the Graces, ’tisn’t but I told ’em that their silver tissues and diamonds would look much more goddess-like than those simple muslins, but Haraminta and Hedwina said ’twas much more lassical to wear them there dresses, for that the Graces didn’t sport tissues at all, at all !”

“ The Graces were perfectly right in their assertion,” rejoined Apollo with provoking gravity. “ When last I quitted Olympus, I do not think that tissues were in fashion, or, indeed, any other kind of drapery.” Then elevating the sisters’ flowery bond of union, Langrave, with mock solemnity, exclaimed,—

“ Rien ne peut désunir l'amitié qui les joint ;
Chaque Grace à ses soeurs semble être nécessaire.
Il faut les réunir pour plaire ;
Qui n'en a qu'une, n'en a point !”

While Mrs Fogarty, like the frog in the fable, nearly bursting with maternal pride, curtsied a thousand thanks for his Lordship's compliment.

The reflux of the crowd now brought the party to Minerva's Temple, which they entered, and found Lady Julia emphatically describing the Panathenaic festival !

“ Ah, now ! is her Ladyship a dragoon ?” cried Mrs Fogarty, eyeing with wonder the helmet of Minerva.

“ No ! she is the Heaven-born daughter of Jupiter's brain !”

“ Goddess of wisdom, here thy temple was
And is, despite of war, and wasting fire,
And years that bade thy worship to expire !”

exclaimed Apollo with affected indignation.

“ Yes !” returned Pallas, casting a look of ineffable contempt at the Roman Matron.

“ But, how insulted is now my Temple ! This pavement, which has been consecrated by the footsteps of Socrates, Demosthenes, Alcibiades, Pericles, Xenophon, Sophocles, Aristotle, Euripides, Phidias, Plato—”

“ And the Graces !” vehemently interposed Mrs Fogarty,—Haraminta, my dear ! Hedwina, my love !

“ Apollo ! for once Minerva condescends to implore thy protecting care from further degradation.”

“ Lead me to where Ilissus rolls his whispering stream,” indignantly interrupted the enraged Pallas, as, elevating her celestial ægis, she descended the marble steps where she had hitherto stood, and quitted

“ The latent relic of her ancient reign,”

attended by Apollo and the Spirit of Philosophy, who, stretching forth his right hand, loudly ejaculated, “ Odi profanum vulgus, et arceo !” to the no small dismay of the Roman Matron, who, gazing with horror at the head of Medusa emblazoned on Minerva’s shield,

tremblingly declared, she never had the *laste idear* of offending the elegant dragoon!

After many more such ludicrous scenes the company began to disperse, when the General resigned reluctantly his lovely charge to Lady Belville, and Albert, as he ventured to take Isabel's hand, said, in a subdued tone,—

“ Farewell, pure Vestal ! It has been to-night my fate to feel

‘ The bliss to meet and the pain to part.’

I leave town to-morrow, but what I have enjoyed this evening shall ever be treasured in memory,

‘ Like the faint exquisite music of a dream.’—

‘ Nymph, in thy orisons be all my sins remembered,’

Tyrconnell added in a gayer tone, as he relinquished the hand he held, gave one last look, bowed, and instantly retired.

Isabel watched his receding figure, and, as it disappeared from her view, heaved something very like a half sigh ; smiled at her own

folly in having done so ; and, pleading fatigue, immediately left the crowded busy scene.

Our heroine's was not a sleepless pillow. She was soon under the influence of Morpheus, quickly fell into a profound slumber, and (dare we venture to confess it?)—dreamed of the Troubadour !

CHAPTER XXVII.

LORD LANGRAVE TO THE HONOURABLE
HENRY ALLINGFORD.

“ ‘ LYSIMACHUS, for extreme thirst, offered his kingdom to the Getæ to quench it.’ Now, Hal, dost think corporeal thirst equal to mental? Surely not; and thy friend’s is the latter. Yes! I thirst—but ’tis for vengeance! What hundred feelings are comprised in that one single word!

“ Oh Hal, Hal! the evil destinies presided at my birth, and drew with their malicious fingers my ill-fated horoscope. All the miseries that erst flew out of Pandora’s fatal box have made my precious body politic their place of rendezvous, and lash me into madness!

This Isabel St Albe—I foresee it, she was born for my destruction !

“ My spirits, as in a dream, are all bound up. Yet I am not jealous—of whom should I be jealous? Of a nameless adventurer—an anonymous pretender—a——

‘ May all the infections that the sun sucks up
From bogs, fens, flats, now on him fall,
And make him, by inchmeal, a disease!’

“ Thank thee, dear noble Shakspeare, thou hast enabled me, with thy necromantic pen, to ease my heart by imprecations on the villain. Now that my rage has found a vent, I almost feel inclined to laugh. For

‘ Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend more
Than cooler reason ever comprehends.’

Well then, sweet Hal ! I’ll now e’en tell

‘ My plain unvarnished tale’——

“ Last night was Lady Belville’s fancy

ball. I went—as what thinkst thou?—as one of the chief 'mongst the *Dii consentes*,

‘ The Sun in human limbs arrayed,’

the great, the glorious, the divine Apollo! How splendid was my figure! It seemed animated by Promethean fire—breathing immortality!

“ ‘ Yes,’ I exclaimed, as I surveyed myself in a complacent mirror; ‘ Now’s the day and now’s the hour for victory!’ May deformity seize me, and ugliness be my portion for ever, if I thought there was a woman in creation could resist me! But what dost think I saw to blast my vision? Why that devil——no—that angel Isabel, looking so perfect and so peerless, and leaning the weight of her celestial form on two supporters—Death and vexation! both of the male gender. One I soon found out to be that piece of impertinent antiquity, General Montford. The other—Oh that I could discover him!—Hal, Hal! commiserate thy friend, for all his efforts have been vain! The fellow was dressed as a Trou-

badour, and sung like Orpheus himself; his face only half disguised forsooth, to show such lips and such a smile! (Oh how I cursed the rascal's white teeth, and wished to dash them down his throat!) And then, when his harp 'tuned a deploring dump,' to hear the silly idiots whisper, 'What a pity he did not personate Apollo!' whilst I, even I, was there, the God of Music's glorious representative! 'Zounds, it was enough to set me mad! and Hal, if thou hadst but seen that *chef d'œuvre* of Nature, Isabel St Albe, how she smiled, how she looked, and how she answered him in notes of dulcet harmony! I felt—Yes, I'm sure I felt as his Satanic Majesty did in days of yore, when he saw our worthy progenitors billing and cooing in Paradise. But trust me, Hal, I'll play the serpent's part!

“ A thought strikes — By Jupiter Ammon! it has released me from the horrors of blue devilism, and elevated my spirits to the highest pitch *in alt*. It must be so. The sly enchantress! Like all her sex, she knows the quibbles and the quirks of love, and wishes to

try my passion, to spur me into matrimony by the influence of that which ‘mocks the food it feeds on.’—‘Maids oft say No, when they mean to say Aye!’ and woman—

‘If she do frown, ’tis not in hate of you,
But rather to beget more love in you;
If she do chide, ’tis not to have you gone,
For why—the fools are mad if left alone!’

Idiot that I was not to see through her little artful policy, and to suppose that whining, canting fellow, with his half mask, could rival me, the glories of my radiant countenance all unveiled, and beaming more than mortal beauty! But I’ll have my revenge on the dear innocent—Yes—

‘Reason’s erroneous honest instinct right,
Monkeys were made to grin and fleas to bite.’

“Now, though I do not mean to compare myself to either a flea or a monkey, yet, I tell thee, Hal, I’ll bite sharper than either; for I heard last night, that the Belvilles are going to the Continent, and Isabel with them, without her Argus-eyed father too!—Mark that,

Hal.—France is the country for spirits like thee and me ! Dear country of liberty,—untrammelled by prejudice ;—and when once I have her there, I will defy fathers, prudes, masked troubadours, and all the host of evil genii, the ‘ endemic atmosphere ’ of this cloudy, foggy climate generates.

“ But, sweet Hal ! I mean to try my Dulcinea’s love, for I will not accompany her to the Gallic shore. No, no ! I will out-general Lady Belville, and affect total indifference,—will talk of going to ‘ the Land o’ Cakes,’ and, the moment the party have arrived at Paris, I’ll speed after them as fast as four horses can carry me. How I exult in the thought of the delightful confusion my Isabel will evince at parting,—her modest cheek dyed in ‘ love’s own proper hue.’ Oh ! that she was, indeed, arrived at that acme of affectuosity to which Lady Julia, and half the pretty dears I ever met, have travelled with such alarming impetuosity and haste.

“ *A propos*, Hal, I met a devil of a Fortune-teller at that said fancy ball, who gave

me such a character ! and before Isabel, who (confound the vixen !) laughed at my too evident vexation. I cannot for my life think who it was ; yet fancy the tormenting Gipsy must have been one of my numerous fair victims, but how tell which ? For, Hal, have I not gone through the whole alphabet of love, and entrapped angelic charmers, rejoicing in names as multitudinous as the letters from A to Z, beginning with Anna, and ending with Zerlina ? Or if thou wishest for further similitudes, have I not gone through every note in Cupid's gamut, flats, sharps, and naturals ? Yes, great, glorious have been my triumphs ! Hal, we are not of the common mould !—

‘ Mean spirits seek their villany to hide,
We show our venom'd souls with nobler pride,
And in bold strokes have all mankind defied.’

“ Drink success to thy friend, then, in an o’erflowing bumper !—*In vino veritas.*——
‘ Richard is himself again,’ and so is

“ LANGRAVE.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ISABEL ST ALBE TO MRS ELEANOR FITZROY.

“ OH ! my dear aunt, such a delightful scene as Lady Belville’s gala presented last night ! Your imagination cannot depict any thing half so superb. Do not expect one rational word from your Isabel’s pen ; for her brain is absolutely a little magic lantern, in which visions of pleasure, lights, music, and all the diversified *et cætera* of a fancy ball still float, banishing every idea worthy of my own aunt Eleanor’s perusal.

“ I feel angry, nay, surprised at myself, for being so very foolish ; but I fear the disk of my character is full of spots, one of which I would not willingly conceal from a true friend.

“ Masquerades I have often heard you reprobate, and so strongly do my father’s sentiments coincide with yours on the subject, that, had the entertainment been given by any other person than Lady Belville, he would not have permitted my attendance.

“ With the general splendour of the spectacle I was in truth much gratified, yet I freely confess that, in the intellectual part of the entertainment, I was considerably disappointed. The characters were usually so very ill sustained,—so little judgment evinced in their selection,—so little intelligence in their support,—self-sufficiency passing for wit, affectation for dignity, and folly for vivacity. Here were Minervas chattering nonsense, and philosophers who, if ignorant of the longitude, gave themselves at least sufficient latitude. There were Virgins of the Sun whose every action betrayed their anxiety to renounce their obligatory vows of celibacy, and all the Gods of Olympus talking worse than mortal nonsense ; while ‘ fair female troops’

‘ Of Goddesses so blithe, so smooth, so gay,
Yet empty of all good,’

were flitting about, whispering, simpering, slandering, and ‘ nicknaming God’s creatures.’

“ But is it only in the masked assembly that the shallowness of insipidity and the malice of detraction prevail ? Alas !—I fear not. For short a time as I have moved within the sphere of the fashionable world, I have been shocked and astonished at the total absence of mental intelligence, genuine benevolence, or refinement of sentiment, which characterize social life, in its present constitution. The ghost of society, ’tis true, we meet, but the animating vital spirit seems wanting. For do we not too often see servile flattery, disgusting insensibility, and ill-disguised malevolence, usurping the place of those lovely graces, charity, humility, and candour ? Is not dullness too frequently esteemed modesty ; pedantry, knowledge ; and impertinence, wit ? while every vice seems tolerated, and every

folly sanctioned that does not militate against the enjoyments of dissipation or the pleasures of sense ! But, instead of a philippic on modern manners, I should proceed to give you some account of a scene which, notwithstanding all its incongruities, afforded me considerable amusement. To my dear philosophic Papa it did not, however, yield equal gratification. I therefore rejoiced when General Montford kindly offered to take charge of me, as my father was then enabled to retire.

“ My dress was the unpretending costume of a Vestal novice, the simplicity of which attire enabled me to pass almost unnoticed, consequently, I had perfect leisure to examine the characters as they passed. But, to my mind, none amongst the motley crowd seemed half so unaffectedly sensible and agreeable as General Montford’s friend, who personated a Troubadour, and who exquisitely touched a harp that equalled in melody the lyre of Timotheus ; but who, strange to say, would not permit the General to reveal his name. Will you, my dear aunt Eleanor, forgive my ab-

surdity, when I confess I called him, in my own mind, Feramorz ? for he did so much remind me of Moore's delightful poet of Cashmere ; and will you still farther pardon me when I acknowledge that, with true sexual curiosity, I devoutly wished some fortuitous circumstance would make his envious mask fall off,—

‘ A mask that left the eye too free
To do its best of witchery.’

“ I know not why, but often during the course of the evening, I involuntarily drew comparisons between the Troubadour and Lord Langrave. The manners of the former were quite as brilliant as his Lordship's, yet so much more sterling, so entirely devoid of those prettinesses of affected sentiment, that characterize the gallant Peer's discourse ; conceits, which remind me of the little many-coloured stones the lapidary sets round a false gem to enhance its value, while the emanations of a highly gifted and rational mind shine like the pure diamond, bright

without adventitious ornament, intrinsic in worth, genuine in beauty !

“ But, even when enjoying the spirit of intellectual intercourse in its most exalted sense, how often will the littleness of vanity, or the deadly influence of envy break forth, as if to prove incontestibly the natural corruption of the human heart ! I have been led to such a reflection, by the recollection of a circumstance which occurred last night ; a circumstance that in a great degree obscured the pleasure I had previously enjoyed. It was like a false note in a beautiful piece of music, and even now jars on memory.

“ I believe I have told you, how frequently Mr Tyrconnell has been the subject of General Montford’s eulogiums. Well ! by accident, the youthful hero became the topic of discourse, and I, wishing to obtain an unprejudiced opinion, asked the Troubadour if he was acquainted with him. Such a rapid transition of expression as the question occasioned ! Feramorz’s smile (which, by the way, is most insinuating) suddenly betrayed so strange

a compound of arch drollery, embarrassment, and indecision ! He replied, 'tis true, to my inquiry in the affirmative ; but so coldly, as if, indeed, half inclined to use the negative ; and, when I enumerated the perfections which General Montford had described as characteristic of his favourite, the Troubadour appeared so much annoyed, so eager to disprove them, as if Mr Tyrconnell's merits would necessarily obscure his own deserts. What a mistaken idea ! How many orbs sparkle brilliantly in the firmament, without eclipsing each the other's light, but rather adding mutual beauty to the perfect whole ! Why will not man imitate celestial harmony ? Why does he warp his genius in the indifference of selfishness, or the debasement of envy ? Instead of rejoicing in the brightness of another's glory, absorbing nutriment from its rays, and pursuing the same luminous track, why does he shrink from, or wither in the blaze ?

“ I did not reveal Mr Tyrconnell's intended marriage to General Montford, because I thought I was not at liberty to do so, having

received the intelligence in some degree under the seal of secrecy. Papa inadvertently mentioned the circumstance to Lady Belville, so pray admire my superior discretion.

“ Once more I must recur to the Troubadour, for I have not told you what peculiar sweetness distinguished his vocal powers. It was that sort of melody which conveys the subject in the music. A person born with a fine and genuine ear for harmony, seldom, I think, conceives what touches the passions to lie in the words. They are only taken as somewhat helpful to the sound, and are considered as quite subordinate to the magic influence of modulation ; but, perhaps, such a discrimination is erroneous.

“ Of my prosing, as well as of poor Fera-morz, I believe you are now completely tired ; yet be consoled, dear aunt Eleanor, the first is nearly at an end, and you hear of the accomplished minstrel for the last time, as he left town this morning, and most probably we shall never meet again on this side of the Styx.

“ I have not given a minute detail of the dresses and entertainments of the past night, because you will see them much better described in the public prints than by my ineloquent pen ; besides, my paper is filled, and breakfast is ready.

“ Adieu, then, my more than mother ! May I not call you so, for, without a child’s claim on your tenderness, have I not always experienced it pure, warm, and unabated ? How readily my heart replies !—

“ Give my best of loves to Sir Hugh Tyrconnell, but do not tell that I have been at a fancy ball, or else the dear old man would abjure for ever his and your

“ Truly affectionate

“ ISABEL ST ALBE.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

As soon as Isabel had concluded her epistle, she hastened to the breakfast room, where she found her father alone, the rest of the family not having yet assembled. The affectionate salutations of the morning being exchanged, "To whom have you been writing, my Isabel?" said Mr St Albe, perceiving a letter in her hand. "To dear aunt Eleanor. I must send it to the office," she continued, as she rose to summon a servant.

"Do not ring. I wish to have some conversation with you in the study," said St Albe, opening the door which led to the latter, and having seated Isabel beside him, he took her hand with tenderness, and added,—“ Isabel, I have prepared two surprises for you this

morning, one at least, I flatter myself, will be of an agreeable nature," said St Albe, as he laid a red Morocco case on the table. Isabel instantly opened it, and beheld a beautiful miniature and striking likeness of her father. Her cheeks were flushed with delight, and her eyes sparkled through tears of happiness, as she threw her arms round St Albe's neck, and feelingly exclaimed,—

"Oh, dearest, best of parents, with what unspeakable pleasure I hail this precious gift! It is your very self!" she cried, holding up the picture, "and looks so sweetly on your Isabel, that I could almost fancy—" She was interrupted by the entrance of a servant, who, requesting to speak with St Albe, he quitted the study, saying, "I shall not long delay, love; let me find you here on my return." Isabel, when left alone, continued to gaze intently on the picture, and yielding to the enthusiasm of the moment, she snatched a pen, and hastily wrote the following lines:

Though thine image, dear father, is trac'd
On memory's tablet, too deep,
During time, to be ever effac'd
By aught save " the long dreamless sleep ;'

Yet as music is dear to the heart,
When echo returns its soft tone ;
So the limner, with magical art,
Shall render thy likeness my own.

But the worth in thy bosom enshrin'd,
Can painter e'er truly pourtray ?
No ! alone in thy heart can he find
What his pencil could never display..

Thus the witch'ry of talent gives place
To filial affection for thee ;
Though the limner thy features may trace,
The soul of his sketch is with me.

And Time's withering wing may deface
These dear mimic features ;—but never
From a daughter's fond heart can he chase
The form that must live there for ever !

St Albe re-entered unperceived, and read the unstudied effusion from behind Isabel's chair as she concluded the last stanza. " Do not allow that drop, affection's gem, like the tear

of Sterne's recording angel, to fall and blot out the words 'for ever!' " said St Albe tenderly, as he kissed with parental pride her glowing cheek, on which the warm tribute of feeling yet glistened.

" They are indifferent lines," said Isabel, deeply blushing, " and quite unworthy your acceptance. Mine, however, is the poetry of the heart, and, as such, my dearest father will not reject it."

" Reject it! No, Isabel, it is more precious to me than the sublimest composition," said St Albe, folding the paper, and placing it in his bosom. Again he paused, and seemed unwilling to alloy the pleasure she experienced, by any communication of a different nature. At length, he said, " Isabel, exert all your little stock of philosophy, for that picture must now be your companion instead of the original. I cannot remain longer absent from Ireland, and must return there immediately; give me then aunt Eleanor's letter. I myself will be the bearer."

" You are not going to leave me, Oh, my

father?" exclaimed Isabel in a tone of anguish. "I am ready, willing, anxious to return with you."

"No, my beloved child. I have maturely weighed the subject, and numerous reasons have decided me to accept Lady Belville's invitation, and to accede to your accompanying her Ladyship to the Continent, where she intends to remain for two or three months. To my Isabel I need not say what struggles of feeling I have endured ere my ultimate resolve was fixed."

"Oh, change it, dearest father, change it! My whole soul revolts at the idea of separation. Think what will become of your Isabel? how will she act when no longer blessed with such a counsellor? To what perils will not her inexperience be exposed? Father, guide, and friend, desert her not!" Isabel added in a voice choked with emotion, as she threw herself into St Albe's arms.

"My dearest child, calm those transports, and listen to the dictates of reason, to whose suggestions I have bowed, checking every

idle and selfish feeling.” St Albe then enumerated the various arguments which had induced him not only to agree to Lady Belville’s proposal, but earnestly to recommend its acceptance. There was a tone of persuasive eloquence in Mr St Albe’s conversation, whenever he truly wished to convince, which seldom failed. Even Isabel’s tender enthusiasm yielded to its power. She saw her father anxiously desired her to remain with Lady Belville, and resolving to conquer her rebellious feelings, she made one grand effort to subdue them, as she said,—“ It is enough.—I will endeavour to be all you wish—I consent,”—she whispered in a feeble voice, burying her face on her father’s shoulder.

“ Thanks, dearest child ! This day, then, I depart,—the communication of evil tidings has been deferred to the latest hour. Let us therefore spend the short time that remains, not in useless regrets, or in anticipation of misfortunes that may never arise, but in the sweet interchange of thought. Moments there are, in which ages of feeling are concen-

trated, and this is one of them, my Isabel!" Then leading her to a seat, St Albe placed her beside himself, and gently said,—

“ Lady Belville appears to take considerable interest in your welfare, my child. Nevertheless, I would not have you precipitate in forming too great an intimacy, nor too confidential in revealing your feelings. Of her Lord and son I can give you no idea; the latter I have never seen, nor the former since your birth, now a period of nineteen years. I will scarcely add a caution respecting Lord Langrave, because I feel convinced, that there is no danger of my Isabel's ever considering him in any other light than that of an agreeable acquaintance, and also, because I am certain his Lordship entertains no serious design whatsoever, but merely indulges in that system, now too universally tolerated which permits a man to endeavour, by every possible means, to obtain the affections of an innocent and confiding woman, without the slightest idea of ever repaying her devoted attachment, except by a course of unmeaning attentions,

adopted through vanity and whim, and discontinued at the instigation of caprice.

‘ The lovely toy, so fiercely sought,
Has lost its charm by being caught.’

“ When the heart is won, the chace has lost its attraction,—the smiling bow of resignation is immediately made, while the fair victim is left to mourn her infatuation and credulity in silence and in sorrow. Such conduct, though it brands a woman with the imputation of being what is called a jilt, in the present state of society, can be indulged in to the most shameful degree by our sex with impunity. Nay, more, it often sheds a sort of fictitious lustre round the character of the villain who adopts it. He is received in the best circles, and envied by the men for his superior success with the fair sex ; while, I grieve to add, he is too often greeted with the softest smiles by those women who have either not sufficient delicacy to reprobate such conduct, or else too little spirit to dare to show their contempt for a

character so despicable, so degraded, and so unfeeling as a male coquet.

“ May Heaven preserve you, my child, from ever becoming, in the slightest degree, entrapped by the insidious designs of such persons. But, whatever may hereafter be your trials, place your dependance on Him who will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. My dearest Isabel, many are the anxieties I feel at parting ; but my trust is in Providence, that you will come purified out of ‘ the fiery ordeal ’ of the world, like gold out of the furnace ;—that you will not become enslaved by its pleasures, nor corrupted by its arts. For, Oh ! Isabel, ever remember that this life is but a passage to another. It is but a land of shadows, unsubstantial and uncertain ; and, even in the midst of its brightest illusions,

‘ The heart, distrusting, asks if this be joy ? ’ ”

“ Oh yes ! I feel, I know it,” said Isabel in a suffocated tone. “ A secret something tells me, that I shall never find true happiness amidst its dissipated scenes. A pure stream

cannot flow from a corrupted source. And canst thou leave me, Oh my father?"

"Isabel, I deserve not the implied reproach,—you know my feelings,—you read my heart,—you comprehend my reasons."

"I do, I do :—Pardon my weakness. Oh merciful Providence," she continued, raising her streaming eyes to Heaven, "grant that we may meet again in peace! That I may never stain my mind by a thought, nor my conduct by an action, unworthy my duty to Thee and to the best of parents."

"May the prayer be registered in Heaven and accorded upon earth!" exclaimed St Albe with enthusiasm. "Isabel, farewell, my child! To an all-gracious Power I commit thee, with hope, with confidence!"

"But the hour of departure is not yet arrived—some moments still remain?" she breathlessly exclaimed.

"No! my beloved daughter. The summons I received a short time since was to inform me that the carriage was in waiting. It now, therefore, only remains for me to tear my-

self from thee, thou dearest, best of daughters ! Farewell, my Isabel !” exclaimed St Albe, tears fast falling down his noble countenance, as she kneeled to receive his parting benediction. “ Oh farewell !— Almighty Being, preserve my child, my darling, and restore her to these arms in innocence, in purity, and in safety. Be a guide unto her feet, and a lantern to her paths ! ”

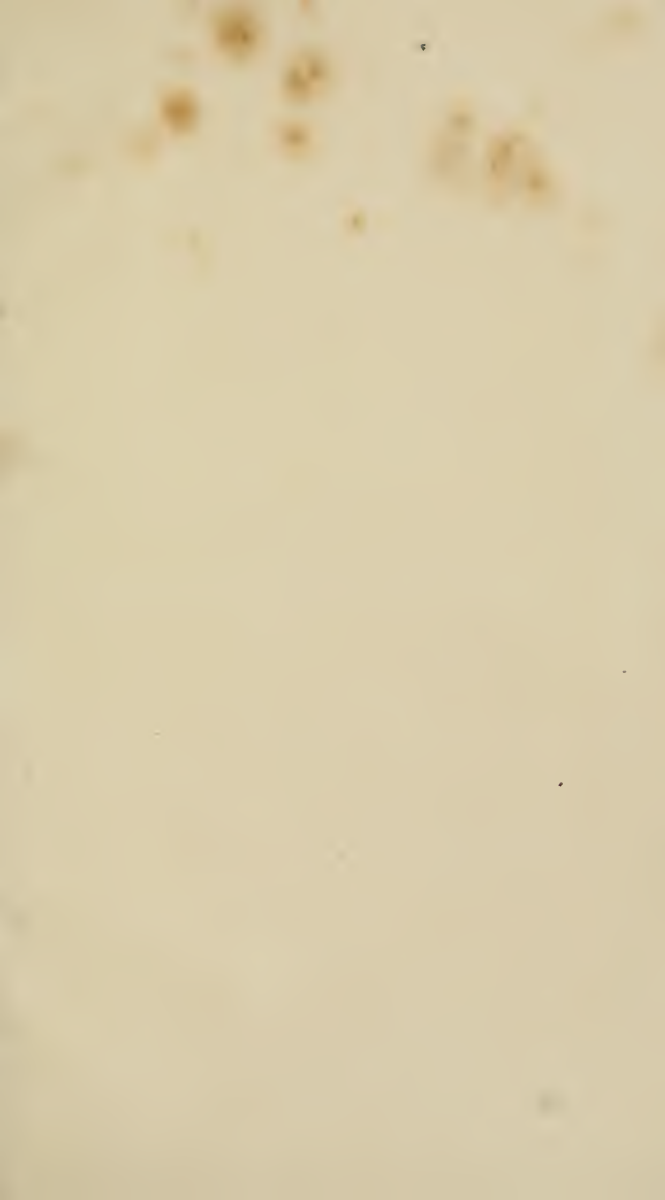
“ Amen ! ”— fervently ejaculated Isabel, as she rose from her knees, and threw herself into her father’s embrace. St Albe pressed her warmly to his paternal bosom, gave one last look, eloquent in tenderness, and, hurrying through the hall, stepped into the carriage, and was in a few rapid moments whirled out of sight.

Isabel, with streaming eyes, watched the chaise from the window as long as it was visible ; but even that last vestige disappeared ! A feeling of desolation then pervaded her mind which she had never before experienced. She felt alone—unlinked—unconnected, in the heartless sphere of the world of fashion !

But Isabel's powers of mind were naturally great, and only wanted exercise and opportunity to evince their capabilities. The first tumult of agitation, therefore, being passed, she resolved not to indulge in weak and useless regrets, but to strengthen her resolution by reflective contemplations, of a nature calculated to fix her ideas and establish her dependance on that Power, to whom she remembered that, in adversity or prosperity, she should equally look for assistance and protection. She retired to the solitude of her own room; soon experienced the calm of resignation and confidence the meditations she indulged were calculated to inspire, and was subsequently enabled to join the family party at dinner, if not with a happy blooming countenance, at least with an appearance of perfect serenity and composure.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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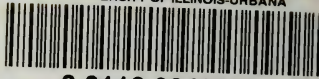








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